Affluence, rationalisation and the skilled worker : A critique of the affluent worker paradigm and a local case study.

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Abstract

This thesis presents a critique of the classic Affluent Worker study and a case-study of the experience and perspectives of skilled engineering workers during a period of rationalisation at the end of the 1960s.
In the critical assessment of the Affluent Worker study it is argued that the conceptualisation of class in terms of market situation provides the consistent organising focus of that study, and that the impoverished treatment of production relations which follows from this focus is the source of key weaknesses in the resulting analysis, both in regard to the complexity and dynamics of consciousness and action in the workplace and concerning the treatment of similarities and differences in the experience of waged work.
Accordingly it is argued that the marxian analysis of production relations provides a more appropriate starting point, not only for discussions of the generic features of wage labour but also for understanding the distinctive experience of particular groupings of workers and the sources of heterogeneity in the character of waged work.
The case-study of engineering workers in three Sunderland factories pursues these themes. It documents a contested, uneven and piecemeal process of rationalisation and intensification of skilled labour; relates this pattern to the character of the distinctive accumulation strategies of specific sectors and firms; and explores the subtle changes in the organisation of the labour process and in forms of craft consciousness and trade unionism which result.
In particular the case-study comments on sources of heterogeneity even in the experience of craft labour itself, and outlines the manner in which limited rationalisation in this period tended to nourish both a sceptical and circumspect craft consciousness and a fairly effective but defensive trade unionism.

AFFLUENCE, RATIONALISATION AND THE SKILLED WORKER: A CRITIQUE OF THE AFFLUENT WORKER PARADIGM AND A LOCAL CASE STUDY

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Confidentiality

In accordance with undertakings to my informants I have used pseudonyms to maintain personal anonymity. I have, however, identified the firms where the research was conducted, because this allowed a more adequate indication of the economic conditions and work processes involved, and thus a more adequate social analysis. I wish to request that these firms are not identified by name in any published discussion or quotation of material from this thesis.

Declaration

No material in this thesis has been submitted for a degree in the University of Durham, or at any other university.

A summary of the analysis in chapters 5 and 6 was given as a paper at the Seminar Series on Workplace Bargaining at Kings College, Cambridge, December 1983, and to the British Sociological Association Annual Conference at Bradford, 1984. The paper was subsequently issued as Warwick Working Paper in Sociology 7, "Skilled Workers on the Margins of Rationalisation: a Local Study", (Department of Sociology, University of Warwick) 1985.

Acknowledgements

I must first of all, though very belatedly, thank those workers at the three Sunderland firms and local trade union officials and managers who spent time helping to educate me in some of the realities of factory life. I also wish to thank my supervisor, Richard Brown, for his advice, support and patience over the years; and my colleagues at the University of Warwick, especially Simon Clarke, Peter Fairbrother, Bob Burgess and Duncan Gallie, for their help. I have benefited from stimulating discussions with Ken Grainger about the experience of another group of skilled engineering workers who faced rationalisation during the 1970s. Finally I must thank my family for their forbearance while I completed this work.

Introduction

In this thesis I will present two rather different but analytically related studies, each concerned with the class location and experience of specific sections of the male manual working class in post-war Britain. The first, presented in part one, is a critical commentary on the classic Affluent Worker study of prosperous manual workers in Luton[1]. Thus it is a critical assessment of an exemplary neo-weberian analysis of the class situation of one section of the manual working class during Britain's post-war boom. The second is a case study of the impact and meaning of a process of partial and uneven rationalisation for skilled engineering workers in a depressed locality towards the end of the boom. This second study, reported in part two, develops critical comparisons with the Affluent Worker analysis, but also seeks to develop some themes in the marxian analysis of divergences in work experience and consciousness among manual workers. In this introduction I wish to comment briefly on both the 'biographical' and the analytical relationships between these two studies, and thus to define more clearly the scope and limitations of the thesis as a whole. These relationships concern on one hand the continuities in research methods and empirical focus between the Affluent Worker study and my more limited study of skilled engineers in Sunderland, and on the other the contrast between weberian and marxian analyses of class location and experience.

Biography

In 'biographical' terms it is important for me to acknowledge that the study reported in part two began as a comparative replication of some aspects of the Affluent Worker study, and only developed in a more critical direction during, and more especially after the completion of, the primary fieldwork. I began the case study at the time of the publication of the initial Affluent Worker monograph, and it was designed as a direct response to arguments in the monographs and some of the immediate debate which they provoked[2]. At that time my primary concerns were (i) to examine the experience and perspectives of some members of what Goldthorpe and his colleagues termed the 'traditional' working class, particularly as these were lived during the late 1960s rather than at some earlier period, and (ii) to consider the immediate social relations of production within which

these workers found themselves, and the implications of such social relations for the arguments over the 'action' perspective which followed Goldthorpe's advocacy of that approach. These concerns structured my empirical work in specific ways which I will comment on further below. However, both the direction taken by the wider debates surrounding the Affluent Worker study and some of the features of my empirical material led me to an increasingly fundamental dissatisfaction with the theoretical framework of the Luton study; to a reassessment of the character of that framework; and to an attempt to ask additional and rather different questions about the experiences of the engineering workers whom I studied at the end of the 1960s. This reorientation is reflected in the structure of this thesis, both in the presentation of my empirical work in part two and in my decision to complement this with a reappraisal of the Affluent Worker study itself in part one. I will now comment more specifically on each of these studies, beginning with the reappraisal, before discussing the more general issue of the nature of the competing marxian and weberian traditions of class analysis to which I relate my material.

Discussion of the Affluent Worker studies has, of course, been very extensive. Current journals still carry occasional articles commenting on various aspects of the theory and findings of these studies, while a smaller number of commentaries, particularly those of Beynon, Davis and Cousins, MacKenzie and Westergaard, have come to be widely recognised as major assessments[3]. I will draw on and discuss these contributions in part one, but I also want to argue that, despite such debate, several key features of the Affluent Worker analysis are still not sufficiently recognised and documented. In particular I will argue that the failure of Goldthorpe and his colleagues to provide any developed conception of the social relations of production is the central deficiency of their analysis, and that this arises out of their intellectual project of weberian class analysis. To document these underlying features of the study I focus my detailed discussion on the papers which launched the Affluent Worker project, and I then trace more summarily how such features structured the empirical investigation, interpretation and subsequent debate. This part of the thesis is completed with a discussion of the differing interpretations of commonalities and variations in the experience of manual work which were developed in British sociology in the wake of the Luton study, giving particular attention to contrasting neo-weberian and neo-marxian analyses.

Thus the purpose of part one is not only to provide a point of reference for some of the empirical comparisons made in part two, but also to draw a contrast in the ways in which these different traditions of class analysis conceptualise class relations, especially in the market and within the enterprise.

I have already noted that my empirical study of Sunderland engineering workers was designed to provide some comparison with the Luton study. Initially this comparison simply focussed on a group of workers who in some respects fitted the problematical stereotype of the 'traditional worker' so often contrasted with the 'affluent worker'. However, in the light of my assessment of the Affluent Worker project this comparison became increasingly concerned with the dynamics of the social relations of the immediate production process as these were experienced by these workers. In particular I have sought to develop an analysis of corporate strategies of accumulation and profitability, the implications of such strategies for the organisation and reorganisation of immediate production relations, and the patterns of experience and consciousness which were involved. Nevertheless my empirical study, though it addresses these themes, still bears the imprint of its origins, and suffers from several limitations from the point of view of the analysis which I have sought to develop. The first limitation arose from the one-sided focus of my fieldwork upon the workers themselves, with very little attention being given to management and corporate strategies. This deficiency echoed the narrow view of social relations in the original Affluent Worker studies, and was one which I had to repair as best I could in retrospect from outside the firms by making use of publicly available documents. A second limitation, less directly related to the Affluent Worker model, was that even in relation to a study of the shop-floor my research focussed on workers' attitudes and perspectives without providing a systematic 'participant observation' study of either shop-floor social relations or union organisation and collective bargaining. Finally the vicissitudes of gaining access, coupled with time constraints, had an important impact on which groups of workers were studied and in what depth. Some of these exigencies of research strategy are discussed at greater length in the opening chapter of part two.

However, despite such limitations, I hope to provide sufficient material to throw some light on the character of class relations as they were lived and experienced by the groups of workers I talked to. These were

groups of workers employed mainly as skilled engineers in industries which were being urged on by the state to 'rationalise' production, and living in a community which had long been on the margins of a post-war boom which was then coming to an end. In particular I will explore the varied ways in which 'rationalisation' was experienced by these workers; the sources of these variations in different corporate strategies and labour market conditions; and the implications of those variations for craft consciousness and action. This material will serve as a basis for reconsideration of some of the arguments about the 'cash nexus', corporate strategies and transformations in production which are outlined in the course of part one. Once more these arguments relate particularly to the contrasting forms of class analysis developed within weberian and marxian traditions, the former focussing upon the variety of market situations and the latter on the dynamics of the social relations of production.

Marxian and Weberian class analyses

Alongside the outline of the structure of the thesis which I have just provided I need also to make some more general comments on the differing traditions of class analysis to which I have referred. While it has long been conventional to regard most sociological debate about class as a controversy between these traditions, this has not meant agreement on the terms in which that controversy can best be understood. After all both Marx and Weber provided complex and contradictory theoretical legacies. Marx's developed analysis of class relations was embodied in his extended discussion of the capitalist mode of production in Capital, but his mature position was not summarised in any succinct statement and left many issues open. Weber's central treatment of class, on the other hand, was codified, but it was also brief, open-ended and arguably preoccupied with the refutation of a vulgar marxism. For these reasons there has been considerable scope for diverse interpretations and elaborations of both marxian and weberian analyses of class, and the 'debate' between them has taken many and varied forms. Against this background I need to justify and clarify my characterisation in terms of the weberian focus on the market and the marxian focus on production relations, not least because the popularity of this formulation in recent years has itself evoked expressions of scepticism, for example from Abercrombie and Urry[4]. Such scepticism arises in part from the apparent implication in these terms that Weber had nothing to say about production while Marx dismissed the

significance of the market, whereas I wish to argue that what is actually at stake are rival ways of conceptualising both market and production, and it is these alternatives which require clarification. Given what I have said about the work of Marx and Weber I do not seek to deny that there are alternative analytical possibilities within both the weberian and marxian traditions. What I do seek is to clarify and justify my characterisation of the main stream of weberian class analysis within which I locate my critique of the Affluent Worker study in part one, and to indicate some of the features of the marxian approach within which I have sought to work in part two.

Both weberian and marxian commentators have agreed on the centrality of the market in Weber's conception of class situation. In particular the sympathetic but critical commentary provided by Giddens clearly differentiates Weber's account from that of Marx, on one side, and those of various vulgar weberians (who conflate status and class) on the other, by underlining the centrality of 'market situation' in his class analysis[5]. Such a view has, in turn, underpinned the efforts of Giddens and Parkin to repair the ambiguities and fill some of the gaps in Weber's argument; the former by developing his analyses of 'class structuration' and the latter by focussing on processes of 'social closure' in the sphere of distribution[6]. Alongside such interventions more hostile commentators, such as Crompton and Gubbay, have similarly emphasised the centrality of 'market situation' in Weber's class analysis, and have counterposed to this Marx's concern with the 'social relations of production' within which exchange and market relations are only specific moments[7].

However, against this apparent consensus, Abercrombie and Urry have cautioned that Weber, too, addressed the theme of the domination of capital within the capitalist enterprise, and this is undoubtedly the case. The critical question then concerns the relationship between market and production in Weber's conceptualisation. For while he does not ignore the organisation of production, his class analysis clearly hinges on the differentiation of market situations, each of which involves a concomitant insertion into the organisational structure of production. Indeed, as Hill, one of the authors cited by Abercrombie and Urry, acknowledges, Weber treated the domination of capital as a technical requisite of corporate organisation, and as an exemplar of the general process of rationalisation, rather than as a critical locus of class relations and conflicts[8]. Such

features of Weber's analysis have been more clearly delineated in Clarke's discussion of the fundamental premises of the marxian critique of political economy on the one hand and marginalist economics and modern sociology on the other[9]. In particular he traces the inability of both marginalism and Weber's sociology to address the thoroughly social and historically specific character of the immediate social relations of production, notwithstanding Weber's project of providing a social and historical, rather than universal and psychologistic, basis for conceptualising the formal rationality of the market mechanism[10]. What Clarke's account does is to indicate not only the different foci of marxian and weberian analyses but also the particular limits embodied in the latter: limits which arise from a naturalist and technicist conception of production relations.

Of course there are a few heterodox attempts to develop neo-weberian class analyses which focus on the social organisation of the enterprise rather than the market, in particular those developed by Dahrendorf and by Baldamus[11]. Paradoxically, however, Dahrendorf's analysis of class conflict in imperatively coordinated associations, characterised as it is by an emphasis on cycles of conflict within a structure of perpetual bureaucratic subordination, underlines the technicist and fatalistic features of the weberian treatment of class relations within the production process[12]. The analysis developed by Baldamus is rather different, and serves as a valuable reminder of the divergent theoretical possibilities which may be discovered on the margins of such analytical traditions as that established by Weber. Nevertheless, despite his sensitive exploration and analysis of the 'effort bargain' as more than simply a market transaction, even Baldamus abstracts his treatment of the open-ended labour contract from any systematic analysis of the development of the social relation between capital and wage-labour. Not only does this leave the commonly remarked unresolved tension in his account between objectivist and subjectivist treatments of 'disparities', but it also means that transformations in labour market conditions and technical changes are treated in an ad hoc fashion as external variables impinging on the 'effort bargain'[13]. Thus, despite the partial exception of this markedly heterodox analysis I feel justified in my characterisation of the weberian tradition of class analysis as one concerned with market situations and distributive relations. This, then, provides the point of reference for my critical appraisal of the Affluent Worker study as an exemplar of neo-weberian class analysis.

Turning now to my characterisation of the marxian analysis of class relations, it immediately has to be acknowledged that the ambiguities and shifts in Marx's own work, together with political and academic controversies since, have generated a bewildering variety of 'marxisms', beside which the range of rival weberian approaches appears very modest[14]. In the face of this diversity of marxisms I intend to narrow down my comments first of all by the simple exclusion of those approaches which adopt an a-social technological conception of the 'forces of production' and/or a trans-historical schema of clashing technical forces and social relations of production, relying on the arguments presented by others elsewhere to justify such exclusions[15]. However, even after taking this step it must still be recognised that the invocation of the 'social relations of production' does not take us very far, for that notion itself has been deployed in many ways and is the subject of much contention[16]. This point is forcefully made by Parkin in his hostile commentary, where he draws an acute contrast between narrow and inclusive conceptions of the relations of production:

> "On the first reading, production relations are treated as conceptually separable from other social relations and institutions, the character of which they are held to shape, influence or determine, according to taste. On the second reading, productive relations are defined in a far more catholic sense to encompass most of the key institutions of society, so rendering any distinction between a set of independent and dependent variables largely inappropriate"[17].

This observation affords Parkin a point of departure for much polemical fun in his discussion of the Althusserian model of levels and last instances, which he generally, though unfairly, identifies as contemporary marxism. Still it does point up a major ambiguity of marxian arguments when class relations are characterised as conflictual social relations of production, but either narrow or inclusive conceptions of those social relations may be invoked. In the next few paragraphs I will seek to provide a constructive and clarifying response to Parkin's contrast by locating and qualifying the claims for the narrower social relations of production within the enterprise within a more inclusive conception of class relations of production in capitalist society. In so doing I will define the position which I have adopted in the body of this thesis.

An appropriate starting point for my response is to consider the analytical basis for the inclusive conception of the social relations of

production of capitalist society. This can be found, for example in Marx's own work, on one hand in comparisons between capitalism and other modes of production such as feudalism, and on the other in the analysis of the historical constitution of capitalist class relations[18]. Thus in feudal society the process of surplus extraction was transparently conditioned by political compulsions, while the development of capitalist production was accomplished through forcible expropriation, state legislation and market processes which together generated a mass of dispossessed wage workers counterposed to merchant then industrial capital. Each of these examples emphasise that the social relations of production cannot simply be equated with the immediate production process or social relations within the enterprise. Rather they support an elaboration of the inclusive conception of the social relations of production to grasp both the totality of those relationships implicated in surplus extraction and the distinctive and discrete features of the various relationships involved. This point has been well formulated by Clarke:

> "The relations of production are multi-faceted relations which are expressed in, and reproduced through a number of interdependent social relationships which are thereby to be understood as forms of the relations of production. The differentiation of these forms cannot be taken as given, nor deduced theoretically, but must be analysed concretely for each particular society"[19].

In regard to the capitalist mode of production this focusses attention on the particularisation and interdependence of the market, the state and the social relations of the capitalist firm as specific moments of the global relation between capital and wage labour.

Such a formulation provides the basis for addressing the distinctive form taken by exploitation in capitalist society, with on one hand apparent freedom and equality in the market and as a citizen and on the other subordination and compulsion in the translation of labour power into surplus value in the immediate process of production[20]. In turn this provides the framework for analysing the distinctive forms taken by the appropriation of surplus value within the capitalist labour process, without treating those forms as exhaustive of class relations or as autonomous determinants of the other moments of the relation between capital and labour. In this regard Marx's own analysis of state regulation of working hours, the social reconstitution of the reserve army of labour, and the transformation of the immediate production process through mechanisation and the division of labour,

all as aspects of the development and dynamic of the production of relative surplus value, can be regarded as something of an exemplar, however flawed[21]. For in that analysis he sought to establish the specific and fundamental role of the transformation of the social relations of the immediate production process, both in producing surplus value and in reproducing the overall relation between capital and labour, but always as one moment of that relation. Thus the dynamic of the pursuit of surplus value within individual capitals is regulated and mediated through competitive relations between capitals and the wider circuit of capital. Similarly the reproduction of the relations of dependency of wage labour on capital is accomplished both through the renewal of the dull compulsions of market discipline and through the transformation of collective labour as an alien corporate apparatus[22]. The social relations of the enterprise and the immediate production process play this central role within the wider totality of social relationships which together constitute the social relations of production. It is this conception of the class relations of a capitalist society which provides the point of reference both for my critique of the Affluent Worker study and for my specific discussion of the experience of sectoral and corporate rationalisation among skilled workers.

Such a starting point for marxian class analysis clearly leaves much unresolved, and indeed those who have defended this conception of the social relations of production have strongly argued the importance of sustained historical, empirically-grounded analysis of the specific form and dynamic of class relations[23]. As for Marx's own analysis, even sympathetic commentaries have drawn out major tensions in his account. On the one hand he envisages a simple trajectory towards class unity and homogeneity and on the other explores unevenness and continuing heterogeneity[24]. Against the projection of class radicalisation is set the theme of deepening subordination and the mystification of class relations[25]. Such commentaries underline the fact that Marx and marxism have often moved too swiftly from a diagnosis of the fundamental features of the capital-labour relation to the prognosis of a unified and class conscious proletariat. This pattern, which has usefully, though perhaps too narrowly, been characterised as 'Manifesto marxism', has always invited those neo-weberian sociological responses which have used a market-based analysis to highlight continuing differentiation and heterogeneity. The challenge, then, has been to develop a more adequate analysis of the differentiated forms of class relations and struggle which addresses both the unifying and divisive features of the immediate experience

of class relations. The theme of division has been particularly sharply formulated by Johnson:

> "as Marx discovered in his deeper analysis, the expansion and the movements of capital do not simply unify and massify labour, even in the direct relations of production. Rather, the working class is continuously recomposed around major internal structurations. These internal divisions - within factories, within industries, between occupations, between the sexes and between the employed and the reserve armies - ought to be an object of any primary theory of the working class. We need to start, indeed, politically and theoretically, not from the assumption of simplification and unity but from that of complexity and division"[26].

Such a stance is a useful corrective to 'manifesto marxism', but in turn it risks essentialising division. What is required to escape such a danger is a recognition that both the generation of surplus value in the immediate production process and the wider reproduction of the capitalist social relations of production are contradictory and antagonistic processes[27]. Active struggles focus around the contradictory features of those specific social relationships - both within and beyond specific capitals - which constitute the overall relation between capital and labour. As a result the subordination and massification of wage-labour are contested, uneven and incomplete processes which need to be investigated in terms of their specific and changing historical and social character.

This emphasis on contradictory and antagonistic social relationships has critical implications for conceptions of class consciousness and class interests. For it recognises that people's experiences of the specific moments of the class relations of capitalist society are fragmented and particularised, but it also suggests that the mystification of those relationships - the ideological rendition of those relationships as distinct, natural and inevitable - remains incomplete, sometimes even fragile. This provides a point of departure for analyses of the contradictions and complexities of class consciousness which escapes from the simplicities of the label 'false consciousness'[28]. It also suggests that arguments about class interests have to address the contradictory foundations upon which both more narrowly conceived 'practical interests' and more challenging 'radical needs' may be articulated[29].

The preceeding few paragraphs have necessarily been rather abstract

and programmatic, though they have been influenced by some of the more specific discussions - about unities and variations in the transformation of capitalist production, the pattern and dynamics of class struggle within and beyond the work process, and the formation of consciousness and 'consent' - which have been features of the recent debate about the development of the capitalist labour process[30]. Clearly the marxian conception of the social relations of production and of class relations which I have outlined so schematically cannot simply be the basis of critique, but must also be the starting point for investigation, analysis and, ultimately, political debate. In regard to empirical enquiry it points, at its most ambitious, towards such 'total' investigations of the developing forms of class relations in specific societies and periods as have been attempted only rarely, for example in some of the work of such marxist historians as Thompson or in the analysis of a distinctive 'regime of accumulation' developed by Aglietta[31]. However it can also provide a point of departure for more limited studies, for example of changes in the social organisation of the immediate production process in specific sectors and firms within a particular political and economic context[32].

My investigation of the position and experience of skilled engineering workers in the face of state-sponsored corporate rationalisation during the era of Wilsonian technocratic Labourism is an attempt to pursue in a partial way such a more limited study. Since the experience and consciousness of skilled workers has been a central focus of more general 'labour process' debate this case study provides a basis for contributing to some aspects of that debate, in particular by exploring the conditions and character of persistence and change in craft work organisation and thus the foundations of a distinctive sectional experience of wage labour[33]. Since such workers constituted a critical component of the British labour movement it also throws some significant light on the changing character of that movement in this period. In these ways, then, the study in part two returns to some of the preoccupations of the Affluent Worker study though from within a different analytical tradition.

Introduction: footnotes

1 John Goldthorpe et al The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour Cambridge 1968; The Affluent Worker: Political Attitudes and Behaviour Cambridge 1968; and The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure Cambridge 1969. References to associated publications are provided in the relevant sections of part one of this thesis.

2 Major features of the initial debate are discussed in Richard Brown "Sources of Objectives in Work and Employment" in John Child (ed) Man and Organisation London 1973, and in the references contained in footnote three below.

3 Huw Beynon Working For Ford London 1973, together with an unpublished paper which much more explicitly spells out the critique of Goldthorpe et al, Huw Beynon and Theo Nichols "Modern British Sociology and the Affluent Worker" unpublished 1972; R.L. Davis and Jim Cousins "The 'New Working Class' and the Old" in M. Bulmer (ed) Working Class Images of Society London 1975, and J.M. Cousins "Some Problems in the Concept of the 'Proletariat'" Mens en Maatschappij 46 1971; Gavin MacKenzie "The 'Affluent Worker' Study: an Evaluation and Critique" in Frank Parkin (ed) The Social Analysis of Class Structure London 1974; and John Westergaard "The Rediscovery of the Cash Nexus" Socialist Register 1970.

4 Nicholas Abercrombie and John Urry Capital, Labour and the Middle Classes London 1983, esp. pp 89-91.

5 Anthony Giddens The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies London 1973, esp. chapter 2 and pp 78-80.

6 Giddens Class Structure; Frank Parkin "Strategies of Social Closure in Class Formation" in Parkin (ed) Social Analysis of Class Structure; Frank Parkin Marxism and Class Theory: a Bourgeois Critique London 1979; and the critical commentaries in Rosemary Crompton and Jon Gubbay Economy and Class Structure London 1977, pp 29-40; Anthony Giddens "Classes, Capitalism and the State" Theory and Society 9, 1980; and J.M. Barbalet "Social Closure in Class Analysis: a Critique of Parkin" Sociology 16, 1982.

7 Crompton and Gubbay Economy and Class Structure esp. chapter 2

8 Stephen Hill Competition and Control at Work London 1981, pp 7-11, cited in Abercrombie and Urry Middle Classes p 89.

9 Simon Clarke Marx, Marginalism and Modern Sociology London 1982

10 Ibid, esp. chapter 7. Clarke's discussion shows that Weber's historical location of the market mechanism leaves the technicist treatment of production untouched, a point not really addressed by those such as Gordon Marshall who emphasise the continuities between the positions of the German Historical School and those of Weber. See Gordon Marshall In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism London 1982, esp. pp 19-36.

11 Ralf Dahrendorf Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society London 1959; and W. Baldamus Efficiency and Effort London 1961

12 For critiques of Dahrendorf see P. Weingart "Beyond Parsons? A Critique of Dahrendorf's Conflict Theory" Social Forces 48, 1969, and David Binns Beyond the Sociology of Conflict London 1977, chapter 5.

13 This is not the place for a systematic appraisal of Baldamus. It is nevertheless appropriate to note:
(i) that most citations of Baldamus involve the ad hoc adoption of the notion of the 'effort bargain' rather than a serious engagement with the structural analysis of social relations which he develops; and
(ii) that his approach highlights the persistent significance of struggles

over the intensity and intensification of labour, which, despite their significance in Marx's analysis, have sometimes been given insufficient attention in marxian discussions of mechanisation and the dynamic of relative surplus value production. For critiques of Baldamus see Michael Burawoy Manufacturing Consent Chicago 1979, pp 10-12, and P.K. Edwards and Hugh Scullion The Social Organisation of Industrial Conflict Oxford 1982, pp 5-7. For one argument that marxian analyses have given insufficient attention to the significance of intensification see William Lazonick "Class Relations and the Capitalist Enterprise: A critical assessment of the foundations of marxian economic theory" Conference paper, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, March 13, 1983; though in turn Lazonick overstates Marx's own emphasis on technical change. For further comments on the problematical status of intensification within the conceptual framework of Capital see Tony Elger "Valorisation and 'deskilling': Critique of Braverman" Capital and Class 7, 1979.

14 See for example David McLellan (ed) Marxism after Marx London 1979, and Perry Anderson Considerations on Western Marxism London 1976. There is, though, a major rift between those weberians who embrace, and those who renounce Weber's analysis of the historical process of 'rationalisation' as structural fate. Compare Bryan S. Turner For Weber: Essays in the sociology of fate London 1981, with Stanislav Andreski Max Weber's insights and errors London 1984.

15 See in particular Phillip Corrigan et al Socialist Construction and Marxist Theory London 1978, chapters 1 and 2, and Derek Sayer Marx's Method Brighton 1979, esp. pp 80-88.

16 See in particular the contrasting positions of the Althusserians and their critics, displayed on one hand in Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar Reading Capital London 1970, and on the other in Simon Clarke et al One-Dimensional Marxism London 1980.

17 Frank Parkin Marxism and Class Theory pp 5-6.

18 See especially Karl Marx Capital vol 1, London 1976, part 8 'So-called Primitive Accumulation'.

19 Simon Clarke "Socialist Humanism and the Critique of Economism" History Workshop 8 1980, pp 142-143. Interestingly Clarke argues that this perspective is implicit in the work of such English marxist historians as Edward Thompson and Rodney Hilton.

20 Marx Capital vol 1, esp. chapter 6.

21 Ibid, parts 3 and 4.

22 This is spelt out most clearly in the 'additional' chapter of Capital vol 1, entitled 'Results of the Immediate Process of Production' and published as an appendix to the Penguin edition, London 1976, see esp. pp 1002-1040 and 1052-1065. In this context the tendency of such writers as Salaman and Littler to contrast a concern with the compulsion of labour market discipline with the marxian concern with the labour process appears quite misplaced, not only for Marx but also for Braverman who is their immediate target. See Craig Littler and Graeme Salaman "Bravermania and Beyond: Recent Theories of the Labour Process" Sociology 16 1982. Abercrombie and Urry do recognise this in Middle Classes p 90.

23 Sayer Marx's Method, esp. afterword to second ed. Brighton 1983; Clarke "Socialist Humanism". It is no accident that some of the most useful debate on this issue has been prompted by reflections on the work of the British marxist historians.

24 Stuart Hall "The 'political' and the 'Economic' in Marx's Theory of Classes" in Alan Hunt (ed) Class and Class Structure London 1977, and

Richard Johnson "Three Problematics: elements of a theory of working-class culture" in John Clarke et al (eds) Working Class Culture London 1979, both provide critiques of 'manifesto marxism' in these terms from modified 'structuralist' positions. Raphael Samuel "The Workshop of the World" History Workshop 3 1977, emphasises the sources of unevenness and complexity theorised in Capital and provides a kaleidoscopic documentation of these features in late nineteenth century Britain.

25 Richard Hyman provides a valuable characterisation of the 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' phases in the marxian treatment of trade unions which are rooted in these contrasts, in his Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism London 1971. William Lazonick "Industrial Relations and Technical Change; the case of the self-acting mule" Cambridge Journal of Economics 3 1979, provides a critical assessment of Marx's over-emphasis on the effective subordination of labour through mechanisation, and, against this, traces the space for sectional struggles afforded by some of the contradictory features of the strategies of accumulation developed by British textile enterprises.

26 Johnson "Three problematics".

27 Peter Cressey and John MacInnes "Voting for Ford: Industrial Democracy and the Control of Labour" Capital and Class 11 1980, discuss the contradictions between the production of value and the production of use-values in the immediate social relations of production, while Terry Lovell "The Social Relations of Cultural Production" in Clarke et al One Dimensional Marxism esp. pp 252-254, provides some suggestive ideas about some of the specific forms of these contradictions in the sphere of commodity consumption. While the contradiction between use-value and value provides a fundamental starting point for analyses of the contradictions and antagonisms in specific social relationships, the character and implications of these features can only be developed through empirical investigation.

28 Relevant here are the discussions by Corrigan et al Socialist Construction pp 13-23; Sayer Marx's Method; Lovell "Cultural Production" and Johnson "Three problematics". Two studies which provide valuable empirical investigations of such features are Paul Willis Learning to Labour Farnborough 1977, and Cynthia Cockburn Brothers London 1983.

29 This implies that there is nothing automatic about the development of the working class as an agency of historical transformation. The relationship between 'practical interests' and 'radical needs' is discussed in different ways by Simon Clarke "Class and Class Struggle: Polarisation, division and fragmentation" CSE Conference 1982, and by Michael Burawoy Manufacturing Consent Chicago 1979.

30 Paul Thompson The Nature of Work London 1983, provides an overview of these different aspects of the labour process debate.

31 E.P. Thompson The Making of the English Working Class Harmondsworth 1968, as discussed by Clarke "Socialist Humanism" and Johnson "Three Problematics". Michel Aglietta A Theory of Capitalist Regulation: the US Experience London 1981, as discussed by Ciaran Driver "A Theory of Capitalist Regulation" Capital and Class 15 1981.

32 An exemplar of such a study is Lazonick "Self-acting mule", though it has to be placed more fully in political and social context, as is suggested by, for example, Robert Gray The Aristocracy of Labour in Nineteenth-century Britain London 1981.

33 Particularly in the debate provoked by Harry Braverman Labor and Monopoly Capital New York 1974, for a sample of which see Stephen Wood (ed) The Degradation of Work? London 1982, and Andrew Zimbalist (ed) Case Studies in the Labor Process New York 1979.

Part One

The 'Affluent Worker' Revisited

Chapter 1

The Weberian Framework of the 'Affluent Worker' Project

The publications associated with the Affluent Worker project range over a variety of specific topics and issues, and in the fifteen years since the bulk of the substantive evidence and analysis was published the debate surrounding the project has developed in a variety of distinctive directions. These have ranged from arguments about technological determinism through discussions of class imagery to consideration of the historical transformations in class organisation implied in the study. Clearly the central purpose of the project, ever since the publication of Lockwood's seminal paper on the 'New Working Class' first articulated many of the criticisms of the embourgeoisment argument and prefigured the findings of the Luton study, was to contribute to debate about the position of manual workers in the British class structure[1]. However this leaves open the question of the specific nature of this contribution and the relationship between the various areas of debate stimulated by the project.

One answer to these questions, given most sharply by MacKenzie, is that the initial project of class analysis set out in the early articles was undermined by an increasing focus on a narrow debate about orientations to work. This led to "a serious diluting of their earlier conceptualisation of class and class structure", indeed to "the demise of the theoretical approach to the analysis of social class enunciated in the early stages of the project"[2]. MacKenzie ascribes this outcome to the contingencies of research in the particular setting chosen by the authors, and, underlying these contingencies, limitations arising from the particular specification of a strategic research setting chosen by Goldthorpe and Lockwood. He argues that the exceptional geographical and social mobility of the Luton workers highlighted the significance of the orientations which informed such mobility, while the absence of sustained comparisons of the situations of craftsmen and clerks alongside the investigation of semi-skilled workers undermines the scope for tracing the significance of "position in the division of labour" which he treats as a synonym for class.

MacKenzie makes some valuable critical comments on the Luton research but his overall assessment remains inadequate. On the one hand he underplays the continuing attention to economic, normative and relational aspects of class situation through from the early programmatic articles to the final monograph; on the other hand his own reference to "position in the division of labour" remains undeveloped, not only in his critique of the Affluent Worker studies but also in his own monograph on a group of American craftsmen[3]. Thus it remains necessary to trace out more carefully the shifts and continuities in the class analysis provided by Goldthorpe and Lockwood.

An examination of these shifts and continuities would, of course, have to recognise one of the points which MacKenzie makes: that an influential phase in the analysis of the Luton material focussed specifically on 'orientations to work'. The first impact of the substantive research conducted in Luton was undoubtedly in the area of industrial sociology rather than in discussion of the class structure more generally. This followed from the emphasis, in some of the early publications of the research team, upon a critique of the major orthodoxies in the industrial sociology of the period. Argument focussed particularly upon the alleged 'technical determinism' of such orthodoxy, and the critique was generally formulated in terms of the priority of non-work versus work determinants of work attitudes, or in terms of the mediating role of social meanings in relation to the experience of environing constraints upon workers[4]. It is also true that the implications of these arguments were generally pursued, within industrial sociology, in terms of a systems/meaning or order/control debate which gave only peripheral attention to central issues of class analysis.

For Goldthorpe himself awareness of this pattern has led to an emphasis in retrospect on the extent to which the first, 'industrial', monograph of the Affluent Worker series (and the related articles) represent a subsidiary argument alongside the main analysis of the social relations and perspectives of the workers under study. Indeed he has specifically maintained that the argument for an 'action frame of reference' developed out of attempts to understand data collected for other purposes, with the consequence that the positive claims advanced could only be tentative in character[5].

However, this duality of purpose should not be overstated, for the key analytical notion of the first monograph -- instrumental orientation to work -- also lies at the core of the subsequent interpretation of the class position and organisation of affluent manual workers. At the same time this does not mean that the class situation of these workers is unexamined because of the focus on orientations. On the one hand Goldthorpe and Lockwood are clearly concerned to analyse the work situation. Their decision to select the sample of workers from three large industrial concerns representing different technologies clearly reflects an initial analytical interest in the character and impact of work and working conditions upon workers' experience and conduct; and indeed implies a particular conception of what might constitute the critical features of work in this respect. On the other hand geographical and social mobility represent aspects of the market situation of these workers. Thus in relation to MacKenzie's argument it is no doubt true that consideration of other categories of workers, such as traditional craftsmen, would make a significant contribution to debate about changes in class relations, but it is much less cogent to argue that Goldthorpe and Lockwood had deserted a concern with 'position in the division of labour' in focussing on their affluent workers. Much more apposite, then, than arguments about the dilution or demise of a concern with class in the Affluent Worker studies is a concern with the specific character of that class analysis and the manner in which it structured the various related parts of the research and interpretation.

This issue of the specific character of the class analysis espoused by Goldthorpe and Lockwood emerges more clearly in marxian critiques of the Affluent Worker studies. This is implicit in Westergaard's commentary but is made more explicit in an unpublished paper by Beynon and Nichols[6]. In some respects their argument parallels that of MacKenzie in noting a shift in the framework of the Affluent Worker analysis from 'economic, normative and relational aspects' to "much greater stress upon the normative and, in the limited sense of social interaction, relational aspects than upon the economic"[7]. However, their overall argument is that Goldthorpe and Lockwood operate with an impoverished conception of class which fails to analyse the antagonistic social relationship between employers and workers. This failure to analyse the structure of social relations between labour and capital

characterised by contradictions and instabilities, underpins an over-coherent stereotype of working class orientations and imagery synthesised from attitude data divorced from lived class relations. They argue that this impoverished conception of class arises out of a symbiosis between the professional specialisation and "privatisation" of sociology and political commitments to social democracy and social reform. This reformist sociology assumes that antagonism and conflict are limited within a range amenable to social reform and analyses working class consciousness and organisation using as a yardstick potential mobilisation for labourist and reformist politics. This is a very suggestive analysis which directs particular attention to the manner in which Goldthorpe and Lockwood assess shop-floor organisation on the one hand and the role of Labour leaders on the other. However what is missing from Beynon and Nichols is a clear recognition of the manner in which a particular theoretical tradition structures the Luton research and its political horizons as well as much ensuing debate. It is not simply empiricism or positivism which constitutes what Beynon and Nichols diagnose as an impoverished analysis of class relations but a particular neo-weberian approach to class analysis.

It is this distinctive orientation in the analysis of the class position of the affluent manual worker which the arguments of both MacKenzie and Beynon and Nichols fail to probe, and yet it is one which, compared with alternative approaches, involved a quite distinctive research programme. While Goldthorpe and Lockwood themselves imply on occasion that their conceptual starting point represents a synthesis of Marx and Weber they are also explicit in acknowledging that their critique of embourgeoisement is inspired by a neo-weberian concern with, and conceptualisation of, "the conditions which determine whether, and in what form, class formation or status group stratification would be predominant"[8]. It is this conceptualisation which underpins their commentary on the economic, relational and normative aspects of class; and as the apologists of embourgeoisement recede into the background in the later monographs, and debate with neo-marxist authors intensifies, the same conceptualisation continues to guide the argument. Finally it is worth noting that the critique of simplistic 'affluence' arguments is presented explicitly as a necessary clearing operation which would allow the return of attention to alternative, neo-weberian bases of debate with and criticism of marxism: the rise of intermediate strata; the independent role of the state; and the importance of income

and occupation on one hand, and status on the other, as bases of stratification[9].

My contention is, then, that the weberian backcloth to the Goldthorpe and Lockwood analysis deserves closer attention as it serves as the fundamental framework for their work and so furnishes a necessary context for a critical assessment of that work. Of course weberian class analysis does not comprise a neatly closed system of concepts, and recent commentaries have explored the main features and dilemmas of Weber's own conceptual framework and have also developed or assessed some of the ways in which that framework can be repaired and elaborated, though none give much attention to the Luton studies but concentrate instead upon Lockwood, Giddens and Parkin[10]. Since Goldthorpe and Lockwood operate within the weberian framework without simply reproducing some entirely settled weberian position I intend to examine next Weber's own conceptualisation of class and production relations, drawing on the commentaries mentioned above, and then to follow this with a consideration of the specific emphases and variations of argument to be found in the work of the Luton project.

The Weberian Conceptions of Class and Production

In this section I intend to provide a summary outline of the key features of Weber's conceptualisation of class and its relationship to status and to the organisation of production. This will be based upon a review of his **analytical** essays on class and on forms of economic action, informed by the commentaries which I have already mentioned. I am not concerned to make an original contribution to the interpretation of Weber but only to provide the basis for characterising some of the central features and dilemmas of weberian class analysis which will be considered in an assessment of the neo-weberianism of Goldthorpe and Lockwood, though I shall not be entirely uncritical of the various commentaries which I have drawn upon.

At the centre of Weber's discussion of class is the market: "it is the most elemental economic fact that the way in which the disposition of material property is distributed among a plurality of people, meeting competitively in the market for the purpose of exchange, in itself creates specific life chances" and "always this is the generic connotation

of the concept of class: that the kind of chance in the market is the decisive moment which presents a common condition for the individuals fate[11]. Commentaries on Weber trace his argument in two directions from this market nexus; 'forward' towards forms of collective action in the market and politics where the relations of class and status become central to the discussion, and 'backwards' towards the organisation of production where the relationship between 'technique' and social subordination is a central issue. I will begin by focussing on the first line of argument, which tends to define the positive terrain of debate and innovation for neo-weberian class analysis, before considering the second line of argument which defines the central 'absence' from that terrain — a conception of the social relations of production.

Weber's conceptual work on class embodies two distinct bases for a critique of an ostensible marxist orthodoxy in class analysis. Firstly there is an argument for the significance of a complex array of class situations corresponding to a variety of types and levels of market power. Thus, while property ownership and propertylessness constitute "the basic categories of all class situations", the fundamental definition of class situation in terms of market situation implies a multitude of distinct class situations[12]. Thus Weber remarks that "in principle control over different combinations of consumer goods, means of production, investments, capital funds or marketable abilities constitute class situations which are different with each variation and combination"[13]. Secondly, there is an argument for the problematical relationship between class situation and class consciousness and action, summed up in the theses that "a class does not in itself constitute a community" and "the rise of societal or even communal action from a common class situation is by no means a universal phenomenon"[14].

It was in relation to this second argument that Weber pointed to status situations as alternative bases of social organisation, but his counterposition of status and class situations in the working of capitalist societies was complex and somewhat ambiguous and has been assimilated to quite varied interpretations. Three strands of interpretation can be distinguished. The first sees status as a dimension which Weber adds to or substitutes for Marx's class dimension. The second treats status as equivalent or subordinate to a distinctive conception of class in Weber's critique of Marx. The final one suggests that the conceptions of class situation and of status advanced by Weber

ultimately become conflated in the process of conceptual elaboration. In my view the first, vulgar weberian, interpretation, which directs attention away from the distinctive fashion in which Weber conceptualised class itself, finds little support in Weber's careful attempt to specify the interplay of status and class, though the conflation noted in the third strand of interpretation may have invited the assimilation of a large part of Weber's discussion into a nebulous notion of status. Thus my comments will focus on the latter two arguments.

What then <u>does</u> Weber argue concerning the relation of class and status in market capitalist societies? Firstly he notes a tendency towards the ascendancy of class organisation in such societies: "today the class situation is by far the predominant factor, for of course the possibility of a style of life expected for members of a status group is usually conditioned economically"[15]. However "all groups having interests in the status order react with special sharpness precisely against the pretensions of <u>purely</u> economic aquisition" : in this context status organisation is presented as a feature <u>retarding</u> the emergence of coherently class-based interest groups[16]. Finally status situation is presented as a feature gaining important <u>autonomy</u> in circumstances where specific patterns of consumption and life styles are somewhat emancipated from their dependence on class/market situations. It is this latter phenomenon which is given a cyclical gloss in Weber's much quoted paragraph:

> "when the bases of the acquisition and distribution of goods are relatively stable stratification by status is favoured. Every technological repurcussion and economic transformation threatens stratification by status and pushes the class situation into the foreground. Epochs and countries in which the naked class situation is of predominant significance are regularly the periods of technical and economic transformation. And every slowing down of the shifting of economic stratifications leads, in due course, to the growth of status structures and makes for the resusitation of status honour"[17].

Thus if Weber is concerned to show how status groupings can limit the operation of market principles by the imposition of exclusions which are based on non-market criteria of honour and life style, he presents two quite different accounts of these limits. In one case, exemplified by the caste system, status groupings provide a general framework for social organisation which leaves little space for

the play of market criteria; in the other, characteristic of capitalist society, status groupings embellish market-based distinctions, and in times of stability such status embellishments surrounding patterns of consumption may appear independant of market situations, only for such independence to be undermined in times of change. Two points emerge from these arguments and both return our attention to the centrality of Weber's distinctive market-based conception of class for understanding his intellectual project. Firstly status appears to be defined as a rather broad yet residual category, over against a tightly and narrowly defined 'class as market situation', and this allows the conflation of processes which are rather different. As Giddens remarks:

> "the use of a single concept (stand) to embrace both of these sets of phenomena confuses as much as it illuminates. While status group relationships, as Weber analyses them, may refer to 'feudal' elements which persist within capitalism..., these are distinguishable from, say, the 'status consciousness' of the 'artist' or 'professor' as compared to that of the 'industrialist'."[18]

Secondly, with regard to the substantive characterisation of the relation of class and status in capitalist society, Weber implies that the central issue concerns the plurality of class/market situations which characterise such societies. For what emerges from Weber's analytical essay is the theme of the increasing centrality of a differentiated array of market situations, confronted and retarded by status discriminations founded in non-capitalist social relations, and encrusted and qualified by status organisations ramifying from distinctive life styles rooted in relatively stable aspects of capitalist market relations themselves. As will be seen this centrality of market class situations is both confirmed and confused by Weber's development of the concept of 'social class' in his later conceptual commentary on class.

This discussion of Weber's treatment of status has, then, returned us to the first basis for Weber's critique of marxism mentioned earlier, namely the complex array of class situations which exist in capitalist society as a consequence of the range of types and levels of resources which people command in varied property and labour markets. Thus he argues not only that class situations are differentiated in terms of the quite specific types of property owned by the propertied, but also that "those who have no property but who offer services are differentiated just as much according to their kinds of service as according to the way in which they make use of these services, in a continuous or discontinuous

relation to a recipient"[19]. He also draws out this feature of his approach explicitly when he comments directly on the marxian notion of the class unity of the proletariat:

> "a decisive factor [in such unity] is the increase in the importance of semi-skilled workers who have been trained in a relatively short time directly on the machines themselves, at the expense of the older type of 'skilled' labour and also of the unskilled. However, even this type of skill may often have a monopolistic aspect".[20]

On the basis of such arguments Weber provides a variety of interrelated cross classifications of positively and negatively privileged property- and skill-based market situations, which have been the subject of diverse interpretations but which clearly underline this central theme of the heterogeneity of class/market situations which <u>may</u> serve as points of departure for individual and group action[21].

The crucial problem internal to the weberian argument arises at this point. It concerns the bases upon which significance is to be assigned to some among a multiplicity of class situations definable in terms of market capacity. This is virtually identical to the problem identified by Marx as the one facing those who theorised class in distributive terms:

> "from this standpoint, physicians and officials, e.g., would also constitute two classes, for they belong to two distinct social groups, the members of each of these groups receiving their revenue from one and the same source. The same would also be true of the infinite fragmentation of interest and rank into which the division of social labour splits labourers as well as capitalists and landlords — the latter, e.g., into owners of vineyards, farm owners, owners of forests, mine owners and owners of fisheries"[22].

Indeed, as Giddens suggests in his sympathetic commentary on Weber's analysis "it implies the recognition of an infinitely extensive number of classes", though he is quick to point out that "in practise of course it is only the more glaring differences between market situations of individuals which are likely to be worth terming 'class differentials'."[23] Clearly, in Weber's own work, some features of differentiation are deemed more crucial than others, but Giddens pinpoints the analytical problem facing weberian analysis in his use of the question-begging phrase "more glaring".

Two crucial features mark Weber's response to this demarcation problem and also characterise the whole neo-weberian tradition. Firstly, he focusses on the distinctive clusters of life chances and common orientations which relate to the patterning and combination of market situations. This provides criteria of demarcation to simplify the account of class structure, but only at the expense of weakening the sharp conceptualisation of class as market situation. Secondly group formation, bargaining and conflict are seen as phenomena of exchange and distributive relations, while production is treated as an unproblematical given. As Crompton and Gubbay emphasise, it is this which represents the fundamental contrast between Marx and Weber:

> "the existence of a market for goods and services is simply taken for granted, rather than treated as a phenomenon that requires explanation .... but we would wish to raise the question as to <u>why</u> skills and resources have assumed this marketable, commodity-like quality.... because this approach takes the existence of the market for granted our attention is not directed toward, and may even be systematically directed away from, the tensions and antagonisms within the relations of production"[24].

These features of Weber's analysis provide the basis for a succinct characterisation of the logic and dilemmas of weberian studies of class: the conceptualisation of economic relations solely in terms of markets clearly implies that a multitude of market situations yields a multiplicity of classes; when production relations are obscured from view the obvious strategy of demarcation and simplification is to identify distinct clusters of life-chances associated with collectivities, communities and status divisions; but this move clearly compromises the clear analytical distinctions between class and status in the process.

It remains for me to trace out more specifically these two sides to the weberian response to their demarcation problem, looking first at the development and dilution of the identification of class with market situation which occurs when Weber introduces the notion of 'social class'. This notion is introduced into the conceptual schema as formally equivalent to 'property class' and 'acquisition class', as one of "the three types of class situation" on the basis of which "associative relationships between those sharing the same class interests, namely corporate class organisations may develop"[25]. However, this underplays the distinctive analytical significance of the notion which is revealed in its definition: "the 'social class' structure is composed of the plurality of class situations between which an interchange of individuals

on a personal basis or in the course of generations is readily possible or typically observable"[26]. This is an explicit attempt to cope with the diversity of class situations for it is in this context that Weber notes that "in principle" there are a great variety of such market class situations, a point which Giddens emphasises when he notes that "the notion of social class is important because it introduces a unifying theme into the diversity of cross-cutting class relationships which may stem from Weber's identification of 'class situation' with 'market position'."[27] Thus social class is intended to introduce coherent criteria for class demarcation while retaining a sense of the diverse bases of the shared patterns of mobility and interaction which constitute such social classes, so that Weber can argue that "transitions from one class situation to another vary greatly in fluidity and in the ease with which individuals can enter the class. Hence the unity of 'social classes' is highly relative and variable."[28]

However, Weber's discussion of social class is only a small section of a brief fragment of conceptual elaboration so it is not surprising that its implications remain ambiguous and open to alternative interpretations. An indication of the range of such interpretation can be gleaned from the commentaries provided by Anthony Giddens, whose work perhaps best combines a critical appraisal of Weber's analysis with a concern to repair and elaborate a weberian class theory.

A 'conservative' interpretation of the meaning of social class, that is one minimising the alteration of focus from that involved in the original conception of class as market situation, might propose that it is intended to connote the significance, in the case of employees, of common labour markets which embrace a cluster of market situations as narrowly defined. Such labour markets, while not consisting of an entirely homogenous population in terms of skills, nevertheless define for that population a common labour market experience. This interpretation appears to be endorsed by Giddens in his earlier, expository work, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory, where he suggests that "insofar as individuals may move freely within a common cluster of class situations (e.g. a man may move without difficulty from a clerical job in the civil service to one in a business firm), they form a definite social class".[29] However, a more radical difference of interpretation seems to be required to take full account of the inclusion of inter-generational mobility in Weber's definition, and to cope with the obvious coexistance of major

differentials of skill and training within the groupings designated as the major social classes by Weber. Insofar as this implies attention to processes of inclusion and exclusion in the course of non-market social intercourse it suggests that more than mere market situation is involved, a suggestion strengthened by Weber's own formulation that "the type of class which is most closely related to a status group is the 'social' class".[30] It is these features which provide the basis for Giddens' later view that the social class formulation "to some extent abandons the position that class refers solely to economic interests in the market, it tends to blur the clear dividing line which Weber originally sought to establish, between class situation and social groupings and forms of action which may develop among those who share common positions in the market."[31]

These differing interpretations of the notion of social class clearly indicate the terrain on which the major British neo-weberian authors have sought to develop their class analyses, taking market and distributive conditions as their starting point and seeking to trace out the patterns of social interaction and collective action which arise from, and act back upon, these conditions. It remains to establish the precise character of the privileged logical and substantive status of the market in Weber's analysis of both class and capitalist society, and its relationship to his treatment of production relations, before I can round out my characterisation of the logic and dilemmas of neo-weberian class analysis.

This requires a brief consideration of the broader substantive and methodological character of Weber's sociology, and in particular its relationship to a distinctive conception of economic relations and the market: that of marginalist economics. It has been widely noted that Weber's conceptual schema for a sociology of social and political action complements such a marginalist economics, and Clarke has shown most clearly that Weber seeks to locate and integrate a marginalist model of market transactions within that schema while not seeking to displace that model.[32] The key to this relationship with marginalism is to be found in the congruence between Weber and the marginalists in both their methodological approach and their substantive treatment of market relations: for each the analysis begins with individual subjectivities and calculations and ends with a characterisation of the pure market as a perfect technical mechanism through which individual rational actions are calculated, related and reconciled.

Weber did challenge certain features of marginalism — those which isolated the economic analysis of the market from an associated systematic sociology. Thus he challenged the grounding of the individual calculations which constituted markets in any universal psychological properties of the individual calculators, and he challenged the exclusion of any systematic consideration of the implications of alternative action orientations related to other complexes of action such as political institutions. Instead of the psychological universals he identifies a particular orientation of instrumental rational action which is actualised in market transactions, and in tension with such calculative rationality stand a variety of forms of value-oriented action constitutive of non-market institutional complexes.

However, the marginalist model of the market as an economic machine continues, despite these challenges, to provide the underlying rationale of Weber's analysis. This is because the ideal-type of instrumental rational action cannot merely be an individual orientation constitutive of a particular market transaction, but it must also be actualised and embedded within the market as a whole system of relations. The very rationality of such action must derive from the claimed systemic character of the capitalist market as a neutral technical instrument for the rational allocation of resources and fulfillment of needs. Thus Clarke argues that on this basis:

> "although economic theory is only one branch of the social sciences, it nevertheless enjoys an especially privileged position. However much the institutions abstractly theorised by economics are located historically, however much historians and sociologists explore the specific socio-historical circumstances within which they came into being, they remain also the supra-historical manifestations of reason and so the universal foundations of a society characterised by its formal rationality, capitalism"[33].

In turn this conception of instrumental rational action, which is grounded in the formal rationality of the market as an allocative machine, provides the yardstick for characterisations of non-rational conduct in both pre-capitalist and industrial societies. In the former an analysis of the interplay of tradition and charisma accompanies a search for the emergence of orientations compatible with market calculation which is, as Jones points out, underpinned by a teleology of potential and incipient rationalisation[34]. In the latter market calculation is the benchmark against which to comprehend both anterior status obstacles and incipient status

constraints; and also provides the basis for conceptualising legal and political forms, as congruent with and supportive of market calculations and hence components of the rationalisation process, or as distortions and limitations of such calculation and rationalisation. Thus despite Weber's argument that the market is only one component of a broader rationalisation process it is clear, as Clarke suggests, that analytically "it is their association with capitalism that marks these forms [of legal and political administration] as especially 'rational' in comparison with any alternative forms"[35].

It is now possible to draw out three crucial implications of Weber's conceptualisation of the formal rationality of the market and of the division of labour between sociology and economics, which bear upon the character of weberian class analysis. The first two points allow a clearer specification of the manner in which Weber treats the organisation of production while the third will provide the backcloth to my earlier discussion of class situation and status.

The first point to note is that Weber derives a characterisation of the organisation of production from the logic of rational economic calculation, of profit maximisation, characterising a market system. In particular he locates the expropriation of workers and the exercise of managerial prerogatives as the technical consequences and concomitants of market rationality:

> "other things being equal, it is generally possible to achieve a higher level of technical efficiency if the management has extensive control over the selection and modes of use of workers, as compared with the situation created by the appropriation of jobs or the existence of rights to participate in management. These latter conditions produce technically, as well as economically, irrational obstacles to efficiency [and] in a market economy a management which is not hampered by any established rights of the workers, and which enjoys unrestricted control over the goods and equipment which underlie its borrowing, is in a superior credit position"[36].

In this context mechanisation, an advanced division of labour, and the organisation of incentives and selection according to Taylorist principles follow from the formal rationality of the given market mechanism. Now Weber emphasises that formal rationality is not the same as substantive satisfaction of needs, primarily because the distribution of income defines 'effective demand'. He also mentions somewhat cryptically that managerial

control over the disposition of labour "is a further specific element of substantive irrationality in the modern economic order", and he recognises in his discussion of class that skilled workers, for example, may attempt to organise a monopoly of their skills which will confront and be undercut by the imperatives of managerial control.[37] However such acknowledgements, while they map out an arena for potential political interventions to adjust the impact of the formal rationality of the market, continue to take the working of the market mechanism as a given from which the organisation of production and an associated division of labour follow as 'technical' concomitants.

The second point which needs to be made concerns the manner in which Weber then abstracts his sociological typologies from any detailed discussion of 'economic' processes. Weber formulates this relationship himself in the following terms, when introducing his discussion of 'types of the economic division of labour' :

> "it should be emphatically stated that the present discussion is concerned only with a brief summary of the sociological aspects of these phenomena, so far as they are relevant to its context. The economic aspect is included only insofar as it is expressed in what are formally sociological categories. In a substantive sense, the discussion would be economic only if the conditions of price determination and market relationships, which have heretofore been dealt with only on a theoretical level, were introduced into it ..... [thus economic theses] cannot be incorporated into the present scheme which is intentionally limited to sociological concepts. In that the present discussion renounces any attempt to take account of this type of data, however, the following exposition in this chapter explicitly repudiates any claim to concrete 'explanation' and restricts itself to working out a sociological typology....For the facts of the economic situation provide the flesh and blood for a genuine explanation of the process by which even a sociologically relevant development takes place. What can be done here is only to provide a scaffolding which is adequate to enable the analysis to work with relatively clear and definite concepts"[38].

Even without any strong assumptions about the harmonious working of the market mechanism this division between sociological concepts and economic processes must induce ad hoc formulations and agnosticism

in the treatment of the division of labour, occupational structure and associated labour market situations.

Together these two features of Weber's approach, the treatment of the organisation of production as a natural product of the predominance of formally rational market relations and the abstraction of sociological concepts from any substantive fluctuations and trends in the market, underpin the weberian treatment of the market as a given point of departure for class analysis. In particular the first feature represents the abstraction of production from class relations as a natural concomitant of market rationality, while interest group conflict is treated as a purely market phenomenon. Weber does not ignore production but conceptualises it only as an increasingly complex structure of administration and technical innovation, rather than as a fundamental site of social antagonism and struggle, as in the marxian analysis of the production of surplus value. Thus the weberian framework does offer some resources for the analysis of production, which might be grafted on to the analysis of market situations, but which continue to treat these social relations as technical and administrative exigencies of rationalisation. Such additions to the analysis of class as market situation are to be found in a number of the British contributions to neo-weberian class analysis, such as those of Giddens and Lockwood, and it will be seen that they play some role in the Goldthorpe and Lockwood analysis.

The final implication of Weber's conceptualisation of the formal rationality of market calculation concerns the logical structure within which he seeks to characterise class and status organisation. As Jones in particular has shown, once Weber defines class as a market phenomenon it becomes logically impossible for him to develop a characterisation of class organisation and collective action within his schema. This is because the market is conceived as the nexus of instrumental rational actions of individual actors and is counterposed to the non-rational particularism of status groups. Thus class mobilisation logically becomes a status formation as it transcends individual short-term calculation: "classes as such could not exist within the sphere of political action, because there a different action orientation is required to the purely economic rational one which produces indices of class situation such as occupation and property.... hence we are left with the paradoxical conclusion that action to attain class advantages

works against the modes of action typical of classes in the market and is not class action at all but must be considered as a status advantage[39]. Thus the dilemmas and confusions which have already been identified in Weber's treatment of class situation, status and social class themselves arise directly from his conception of the market and market rationality (which Jones argues is underpinned by the neo-Kantian dualism between the formal materiality of the phenomenal realm and the intrinsic subjectivity of the spiritual).

It is now possible to summarise the main elements of the weberian framework for class analysis. The core feature and point of departure for the analysis is the market, for market situations are held to constitute the bases of economic interests, action and conflict. Such a focus on the market and associated distributive patterns and interests treats the social organisation of production as a given: it precludes any real consideration of the antagonistic relations which structure the development of those social relations in production and which condition market relations. Thus within the weberian tradition the organisation of production tends to be treated either in terms of automatic technical and organisational corollaries of market situations, or, occasionally, in terms of a universalised and enduring tension between the command structure and those subordinated to control.

Because of these features the central focus of weberian class analysis is on the relationship between market situation and forms of collective mobilisation and consciousness. Since the delineation of classes in market terms confronts the problems of multiplicity and demarcation the tendency is to relax Weber's proposition that "a class does not in itself constitute a community", and to delineate significant classes in terms of social processes of exclusion, inclusion and mutual orientation either in collective organisation and action or within the realm of consumption and sociability[40]. This has important implications for the arguments over class consciousness which have been central to the weberiam critiques of marxism. For this analytical strategy escapes from the difficulties associated with marxian conceptions of false consciousness but only by assimilating class to community and consciousness, thus loosing any real leverage on questions of partial or distorted forms of consciousness. While such an assimilation of class to culture is explicitly avoided by Weber's initial formulation of class as market position this is clearly compromised by the notion

of 'social class' upon which much neo-weberian theorising builds.

Critical commentators have traced out these features of weberian analysis and their associated limitations in the general and programmatic works of Parkin and Giddens in particular[41]. The former has frankly focussed on distribution and has moved from an initial preoccupation with the patterning of market differentials between manual and white-collar workers to a central concern with alternative strategies of collective organisation which are themselves seen to demarcate and consolidate class boundaries and regulate market returns. Thus Parkin clearly repudiates any serious analysis of the social relations and antagonisms characterising production and argues instead that "social classes be defined by reference to their mode of collective action rather than their place in the productive process or the division of labour"; and he also recognises, indeed claims as a virtue, that his analytical strategy collapses class location into collective organisation itself and thus loses any concern with the complexity of their relationship, since "there is no independantly defined structure of positions for class action to be discrepant with"[42]. While Parkin builds on Weber's discussion of social closure Giddens has explicitly sought to develop his concept of 'social class' into a notion of class structuration. This seeks to trace how "an indefinite multiplicity of cross-cutting interests created by differential market capacities" is consolidated into major social groupings, most crucially through the patterning of mobility chances which "operate as 'overall' connecting links between the market on the one hand and structured systems of class relationships on the other"[43]. To this 'mediate' structuration Giddens adds as 'localised' or 'proximate' factors, which may consolidate or reinforce the impact of social mobility and closure, the technical division of labour in production, authority relations in the enterprise and consumption/distributive groupings. Thus his analysis does incorporate production relations in a subsidiary explanatory role, but after criticising marxism for conflating the technical exigencies of modern production with the social relations of a capitalist society his treatment of production is reduced to ad hoc observations about the impact of such supposed technical exigencies. In parallel with this his discussion of class consciousness emphasises that distinctive patterns of consciousness correspond to distinctive clusterings of market capacities, while he treats revolutionary perspectives as the products of extraneous factors[44].

Of course, criticism of these authors for their isolation of market relations from production relations, their naturalisation of those production relations, and their solution of demarcation problems by collapsing class analysis into existing patterns of consciousness and organisation, does not mean that their discussions are simply valueless. As Crompton and Gubbay note "they are not so much incorrect as incomplete. Given the dominance of the market ... it would be futile to deny that much overt conflict centred round access to the market, or that the sophisticated analyses of 'closure' and 'structuration' give valuable insights into the analysis of such market conflicts"[45]. However they also suggest that such insights can be incorporated in a more adequate fashion into a marxian analysis focussed on the social relations of production. My concern is to trace out the impact of the weberian framework of class analysis on a specific empirical investigation of the British class structure rather than within a more general discussion of the sort provided by Parkin or Giddens, but in looking at the development of the Affluent Worker project I hope to show that despite the existence of valuable empirical data and analytical insights it too is structured and limited by the Weberian framework which has been explored above.

The Weberian Referents of Goldthorpe and Lockwood

The weberian foundations of the approach to class analysis developed by Goldthorpe and Lockwood are made particularly explicit in their basic position paper of 1963, though of course the weberian inspiration of Lockwood's powerful critique of marxian accounts of the supposed 'false consciousness' of clerical workers was similarly explicit[46]. In the later publications of the Affluent Worker series the bases of the critique and analysis are less explicit but there is no evidence to suggest that the general conceptual stance of the 1963 paper had been repudiated, and indeed there are some direct similarities of position to those adopted by Lockwood in The Blackcoated Worker when marxism rather than embourgeoisement returns to the centre of Goldthorpe and Lockwood's critical attention[47]. I do not wish to claim that there were no shifts of emphasis during the course of the design, investigation and writing up of the Affluent Worker studies, but rather, as I have already suggested, that such shifts of emphasis need to be located within the general analytical programme if they are to be properly understood[48].

Similarly, the emphases of the various publications of the research team cannot be adequately characterised as arising simply from the biographical and intellectual interplay of shifting sources of inspiration and changing focal antagonists[49]. Clearly the arguments have developed in relation to debates which have engaged with such particular protagonists: at various times the embourgeoisement theorists, proponents of technical implications analyses and various strands of neo-marxism have been the prime targets of critique. However, to reduce the argument to the terms of such shifting debate gives insufficient attention to the coherence of the intellectual position from which the critiques were launched. Both the choice of protagonists and the specific terms of contestation chosen by Goldthorpe and Lockwood express their concern to defend and elaborate a distinctively 'sociological' approach to class analysis by developing a variant of neo-weberian theorising. This is not to claim, of course, that their conceptualisation is reducible to Weber's schema, for other currents of analysis and polemic provided important resources in their particular rounding out of a recognisably weberian approach.

The best starting point, then, for a consideration of the theoretical framework adopted by Goldthorpe and Lockwood is their 1963 paper on 'Affluence and the British Class Structure', and in particular the appended 'note on concepts and definitions' which represents a careful conceptual clarification of their approach to class analysis[50]. Alongside this can be set the major analytical claims of the earlier publications by Lockwood which set the scene for the joint project: his historical analysis of the changing position of white-collar workers, The Blackcoated Worker, and the first intervention in the debate over embourgeoisement in his paper on "The 'New Working Class'."[51]

Goldthorpe and Lockwood begin their note on concepts by distinguishing their viewpoint from that of those vulgar weberians who regard class, status and power as three distinct dimensions of stratification on which individuals may be ranked. Such students of the 'dimensions of stratification' no doubt draw upon some aspects of the ambiguous formulations offered by Weber, but their identification of class simply with income levels and their treatment of status groupings as status levels to be mapped onto a coherent schema of status rankings clearly represent a truncated conception of the weberian

analytical project[52]. At the same time some of these features of the dimensional approach coincide with the assumptions of the embourgeoisement argument which Goldthorpe and Lockwood were concerned to contest, even though the proponents of that argument did not explicitly appeal to such a dimensional view of stratification.

In contrast to these approaches Goldthorpe and Lockwood begin by distinguishing between on the one hand class and status <u>situations</u>, and on the other hand the variant forms of social <u>groupings</u> which may arise out of the experience of those situations. They outline the weberian notions of class situation -- income and other aspects of life chances flowing from possession of property or skills which can be deployed primarily in market transactions -- and status situations -- honour and other aspects of life chances flowing from command of status prerogatives -- as analytically distinct determinants of patterns of inequality and bases of collectivity formation. They then emphasise that:

> "although Weber was much concerned with the relationship between different aspects of inequality within a given society (primarily the inter-connections between 'class' and 'status' situation), it would seem clear from his work that a more fundamental interest was in investigating the conditions which determined whether, and in what form, class formation or status group stratification would be predominant"[53].

It is this focus on the conditions of formation of class or status <u>groupings</u>, rather than on the changing circumstances of class positions which Goldthorpe and Lockwood adopt in defining their critical stance in regard to the embourgeoisement theorists. Thus they suggest that:

> "from this point of view, our interest is the nature and causes of change in the position of the manual wage-earner that involved simultaneously a weakening of 'communal' forms of class consciousness and class behaviour and (possibly) a modification of the predominant lines of 'conventional' status group stratification within the local community"[54].

This concern is expressed in the broad conceptualisation of class structure to embrace both the fundamental determinants of inequality and the sub-cultural groupings which arise in complex ways therefrom; an aspect of their approach that prefigures Giddens's notion of structuration. Thus the term class structure and the more generic notion of 'class stratification' are used to refer to:

> "both 'class' and 'status' aspects of inequality....to the overall differentiation of populations in terms of both 'life chances' and

'life styles', i.e. to a system of broadly correlated socio-economic inequalities and subcultural differences."[55]

This conception of class stratification, which recombines aspects of class analysis which the authors had earlier been at pains to distinguish but which fails to clarify the relationships between these aspects, is reflected in the specific working definitions with which their conceptual note concludes:

"Working class and middle class: here we refer to collectivities within the total society, the members of which have basically similar class positions. For the purposes of this paper, we have regarded the rough dividing line between the working and middle classes as being that -- equally rough -- between manual and non-manual workers and their families ... As we try to show in the body of the paper, manual and non-manual employments tend to be differentiated in a variety of ways which will significantly affect the life chances of their occupants. We also suggest that there are broadly correlated differences in belief and value systems and in behavioural patterns. Furthermore, it would appear from the available evidence that at the level of the local community, the manual/non-manual division tends commonly to be also a line of status group demarcation -- this enables us, incidentally, to re refer to 'working class' and 'middle class' status groups."[56]

As will be evident, these "descriptive categories" are formulated in terms which correspond closely with the problematical notion of social class developed in Weber's own essay. They suggest a dependence on attributes of collectivity formation and consciousness as criteria for the demarcation of significant divisions between the class situations of employees. At the same time the plurality of class situations and the ambiguity of the criteria of demarcation afforded by collectivity formation and status inclusion and exclusion are acknowledged when Goldthorpe and Lockwood comment upon internal divisions within the working and middle classes:

"in making such refinements we are taking into account the fact that within the classes we have defined, some variation in life chances will be found — as, for example, between manual workers who have scarce skills to offer in the market and those who have no more than physical labour power. More importantly, though, we also recognise that at a

"local level status group stratification may occur not only between but also among those who have basically comparable class positions"[57].

While this comment clearly follows Weber's conception of a plurality of market situations among employees, it is less clear whether status group formation is seen as a substantial independent basis of differentiation or primarily as a significator of the saliency of particular aggregates of market situations. This may reflect the dual usage of the term status in Weber's own writing, and certainly suggests that Goldthorpe and Lockwood are beset by the definitional dilemmas, arising from Weber's conception of market situation in individualist terms, which I noted in the previous section of this chapter. Faced with these difficulties two alternative modes of analysis would seem to be available to these authors. One would require a more systematic analysis of the gravity of particular cleavages among the multiplicity of market situations before considering the problematical relationship of such cleavages to forms of collectivity and consciousness. This would require a move away from a preoccupation with market situations as such towards the examination of the class relationships which are embodied in both the social relations of the immediate production process and market exchanges. The other approach would represent the development of the weberian programme of class analysis by giving priority to the extant patterns of organisation, inclusion, exclusion and perspective among employees as bases for adjudicating the significance of potential divisions among a range of market situations. It is this latter position which Goldthorpe and Lockwood appear to adopt, collapsing the analysis of class position into the delineation of class cultures and leaving the "rough" dividing line between the working and middle classes virtually untheorised and certainly inadequately defended in relation to other points of division which might have been chosen. This is not to deny that in their treatment of collectivities and ideologies Goldthorpe and Lockwood emphasise the distinctive character of those groupings and ideologies which articulate conflicts of interest and those which embrace commonly accepted status hierarchies, thus indicating the distinctive strategies of usurpation and exclusion which later came to form the bases of Parkin's analysis of social closure. Rather it is to suggest that their discussion of collectivities and ideologies comes to be the prime basis of class demarcation and a rather sketchy treatment of class situation is subsumed under that exercise in demarcation.

Of course, Goldthorpe and Lockwood do give some specific attention to the conceptualisation of class situations. In this regard they remark that they do not wish to "abandon the use of 'class' in a more technical sense after the manner of Marx and Weber", and they define class situation or class position (for them apparently interchangeable terms) as "the position of an individual or group in terms of their economic resources and power, and the related constraints upon their conduct in so far as these arise from their role in the social division of labour."[58] In addition they suggest that "Weber's idea of 'class situation' is very similar to that of Marx: it includes not only opportunities to gain sustenance and income through the possession of property or skill in different economic systems (primarily those in which the market is highly developed), but also the life experiences arising from the way in which such opportunities are organised (eg., 'the necessity of complying with the discipline of a capitalist proprietor's workshop')."[59]

However these formulations raise a number of problems. Firstly they fail to acknowledge the major divergences of approach between Marx and Weber which Lockwood found so germane to his critique of marxian analyses of clerical workers: the difference between the plurality of market situations which constitute class situations in Weber's schema and the fundamentally dichotomous underlying social relations of production which constitute class relations for Marx. Secondly these differences provide the frameworks for radically different approaches to the analysis of the logic of development of "roles in the social division of labour". While the quotation from Weber's essay on 'The Social Psychology of the World Religions' concerning "the discipline of a capitalist proprietor's workshop" directs attention to the constraints arising from the organisation of production, it is clear that these are treated merely as concomitants of specific market capacities and situations so that the broader dynamic of antagonism and conflict which arises from the social relations between employers and workers and conditions both production and market relations receives no analysis.[60] Thus the invocation of the social division of labour is a quite inadequate basis for implying a convergence or synthesis of marxian and weberian approaches; and the manner in which Goldthorpe and Lockwood develop their formulation of class situation or class position remains firmly within the weberian treatment of production relations as corollaries of market relations,

hence quite unable to serve as a focus for the analysis of the capital-labour relation in the production process or as a basis for resolving the dilemma of demarcation which all neo-weberian analyses face. These limitations, if they are not repaired elsewhere in the Affluent Worker corpus, must make it difficult to develop any adequate analysis of the problematical relationship between class relations and worker organisation and consciousness: without any systematic analysis of one pole of that relationship an examination of the other must tend to become a more or less self-contained exercise.

So far I have focussed on the limited, and distinctively neo-weberian conceptualisation of class position and the preoccupation with social perspectives and community interaction in the important but rather neglected analytical notes which Goldthorpe and Lockwood appended to their 1963 position paper. Before going on to consider whether and in what ways these features and their associated difficulties structured the later work on the Affluent Worker it is also necessary to consider the ways in which production and social interaction and consciousness were dealt with in Lockwood's earlier writings, which have sometimes been identified as offering a distinctly more adequate point of departure for the Affluent Worker study than is implied by the discussion so far.[61] In this respect his first intervention in the embourgeoisement debate, precisely at the time when working class affluence was being widely canvassed as an explanation of the Conservatives 1959 election victory, forms a bridge between the Luton study and his earlier investigation of the class consciousness of the clerk.

The theme of his initial critique of embourgeoisement interpretations is their "naive economic determinism, neglecting almost completely the structure of social relationships by which class attitudes are generated, sustained and modified."[62] Lockwood saw one manifestation of this neglect in the broad and simplistic contrasts often drawn between the traditional, impoverished, inward-looking working class and the new affluent middle-class-oriented working class: contrasts which appealed to gross aggregate measures of levels of employment and prosperity and implied their generalised and equivalent impact. Against such contrasts he emphasised the importance of "concern with the internal structural differentiation of the working class in sociological terms."[63] This critique of the global character of the generalisations made by the embourgeoisement theorists

was, however, only one aspect of the more fundamental criticism of 'economic determinism' which Lockwood developed. The criticism of generalisation in relation to gross aggregates is very clearly grounded in the more basic argument that workers' social perspectives and political commitments develop through a complex process of social mediation of a specific network of immediately experienced social relationships. Thus Lockwood argues that:

> "to know that a worker is prosperous tells us less about his social and political propensities than does a knowledge of his working environment, family connections and community structure. It is in the complex interplay of these social relationships that originate the forces which shape attitudes in a class- or status-conscious direction"; and also that "sensitivity to class is developed in a variety, but limited number of contexts: in the family, at work, in leisure activities in the local community, and in those 'intersticial' and fleeting episodes of impersonal contact such as occur, for example, when travelling on public transport."[64]

It is in terms of this argument, about the manner in which perspectives and normative commitments are established in those immediate patterns of social relationships which constitute everyday experience, that Lockwood challenges the cavalier accounts of absorption into the middle mass offered by the proponents of embourgeoisement. This emphasis on the 'working up' of immediate experiences in both work and the community, rather than mere membership of an income category, appears to have been inspired particularly by Bott's studies of the relation of class ideologies to a person's 'various primary social experiences' - though Lockwood does not explicitly make this connection until later, in his 1966 paper on 'Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society'.[65] Two features of the way in which he develops this approach deserve further comment: first the manner in which he conceptualises work and second his concern with the interactional and normative boundaries of class groupings.

In this essay Lockwood does not treat all primary social experiences as simple equivalents but gives work experience priority because it involves unavoidable constraints:

> "the enduring influence of work relationships would hardly need stressing were it not that the thesis of the 'new working class'

discounts it. If it is true that full employment and prosperity have made the new working class more family-centred and consumption-minded, it is just as true that the greatest potential for change in class relations is still located in the relationships of industry. Whatever the degree of family-centredness, work relations are unavoidable, daily impressing upon the individual a consciousness of differential power and prestige"; whereas community relationships "unlike those of work... are not to the same extent necessary."[66] Thus in this paper the constraints inherent in the 'social division of labour' again receive attention, in the context of the emphasis on the impact of immediately experienced social conditions upon class formation. And it is at this point that Lockwood provides the outline of key features of varying work situations which MacKenzie highlights as a most promising starting point in his critique of the later development of the Luton project:

> "the structure of the work situation is governed partly by technical, partly by social factors; and it is of the utmost importance for an understanding of the worker's image of society to know within what limits the organisation of work varies between industries and between firms. The size of the factory, the organisation of the work group, its relation to supervisors and management, the degree to which the worker has control over his work process, the extent to which the job facilitates or prevents communication between workers, the rigidity of the distinctions between staff and works, security of tenure, the progressiveness of earnings, and job discipline — these represent some of the points of reference for a construction of a typology of work relationships, without which no clear appreciation of class identification can be obtained. It should aim at an understanding of the way in which the work situation affects the individual's image of the class hierarchy, and how it reinforces or contradicts his experiences off the job."[67]

It is true, as Mackenzie suggests, that this passage in what can be considered as the very first essay of the Affluent Worker series constitutes the most extensive catalogue of features of the work situation relevant to a class analysis to be found in any of the project publications; and also that it suggests some clear continuities with Lockwood's earlier analysis of the class position and consciousness of the clerk. At the same time, when placed in the context of the paper as a whole, this passage represents at best an indication of some of the features which would have to be integrated into an analysis of the

underlying dynamics of the social relations of production. As it stands Lockwood's catalogue implies the construction of a refined typology of varieties of work situation which might be correlates of distinctive market capacities but does not begin to develop any analysis of the fundamental social relations involved or of the common dynamics which might characterise those relations across a range of specific technologies and supervisory structures. Thus Lockwood proposes to search for a correspondence between this constellation of market-capacity related features and settled gestalts of social imagery without any real consideration of the wider social relations betweem labour and capital which animate these features. From this perspective the concern with 'roles in the division of labour', detected and advocated by MacKenzie, is quite compatible with a weberian market-based class analysis and does little to avoid resolving any problems of demarcation by collapsing the discussion of class position into that of processes of communal inclusion and exclusion. Thus the other major theme of Lockwood's essay concerns precisely this question of the manner in which understandings and aspirations interplay with experience of the contours or boundaries of social intercourse and exclusion which characterise specific localities. These preoccupations are evident in his development and application of the notions of normative and social (or relational in the terminology of later essays) aspects of class crystallization:

> "from the point of view of changing class structure the transition from normative identification to social acceptance is surely vital Not only because, as Marshall says, the essence of social class is the way in which a man is treated by his fellows, but also because the way in which he is treated will have its effect on his attitude towards the social hierarchy and its legitimacy. For those working class families who are aspiring to membership of the middle class, the openness or closure of the status system is critical."[68]

Similar features also characterise Lockwood's work on the Blackcoated Worker which constitutes both an analytical and substantive point of reference for the Affluent Worker project; and indeed they have received particular comment in recent years in the critiques mounted by Crompton and her colleagues on one hand and by Bain and his co-authors on the other. These features and criticisms deserve a brief comment before concluding this discussion of the initial conceptual framework of the

collaborative research mounted by Goldthorpe and Lockwood.

The Blackcoated Worker is explicitly organised as a critique of marxian arguments which claim that white-collar workers share a common class position with manual workers but manifest a distinctive and hence false consciousness. Against this view Lockwood argues that a more refined analysis of class situation, which goes beyond the distinction of propertied and propertyless to discriminate a range of market situations and work situations, would then grasp the distinctive consciousness of the clerical worker as the product of a distinctive class situation: no longer false but in a sense true. In addition this perspective would allow an examination of status discriminations not as some quite separate set of processes but as "distinctions [which] can aggravate or mollify class conscious feeling" arising out of the subtle variations of market and work situations.[69] This conceptualisation is clearly modelled on Weber's discussion, though Lockwood also claims that "'market situation' and 'work situation' comprise what Marx essentially understood as 'class position'."[70] It provides the structure for his demonstration of: the convergence but residual advantage of clerks over manual workers in terms of income and fringe benefits; the continuing distinctiveness of the position of white collar workers in the work situation, where the interpersonal relations of the small office and limited mechanisation to some extent offset the bureaucratisation of clerical work; the operation of status discriminations around the divisions compounded of these convergences and differences; and finally the correspondence of distinctive forms of class organisation and consciousness with distinctive class situations, at least in so far as forms of trade union organisation represent adequate proxies for the former.

However, his analysis does not genuinely synthesise Weber and Marx, a task which would anyway be difficult given their quite distinctive points of departure. It continues to treat the work situation in terms of a catalogue of correlates of market capacities on the one hand and as the products of a generalised process of rationalisation and bureaucratisation on the other. A particularly significant symptom of Lockwood's failure to address the underlying dynamic of relations between the propertied and propertyless (and not just these features as characteristics of market capacities as he tends to caricature the

marxian position), is his equation of employment relations with the presence, absence and character of interpersonal relations between immediate superiors and subordinates. A critique of Lockwood in very much these terms has been developed by Crompton:

> "in the first place, 'market situation', whilst certainly corresponding to Weber's definition of social class, gives a misleading impression of Marx's analysis. As is made clear in Marx and Engels' later writings, for Marx, market relations represent only one side of reality; they are 'surface processes' which mask the relationships underlying market activity -- i.e. capitalist relationships of production. Lockwood's discussion of the 'work situation' compares clerical with manual workers in respect of job content and working conditions, and proximity (or otherwise) to positions of authority within the workplace. Although I would not deny that there exist considerable differences between manual and white-collar work and authority relationships, I would argue that, like market structures, such relationships can only be fully understood if they are seen as being mediated through capitalist <u>production</u> relationships. Lockwood's account of social class, therefore, is essentially a neo-Weberian market-oriented approach, and, because such an approach fails systematically to take into account the structures and relationships underlying work and market situations, explanations deriving from this approach to social class can only be partial..... his analysis fails to explain <u>why</u> the white-collar market situation is as it is, or <u>why</u> the white-collar work situation is as it is -- and provides no guidance or explanation as to why they have changed recently."[71]

This diagnosis no doubt counterposes to Lockwood's approach a marxian analysis of white-collar work which itself requires considerable development and faces major difficulties, but it clearly identifies the manner in which Lockwood operates within the neo-weberian framework and faces the difficulties associated with that framework.[72] Indeed Crompton's discussion probably overstates the innovativeness of Lockwood's approach arising from his conceptualisation of work situation, for as has been seen Weber's analysis of class as market situation itself accomodated attention to workplace correlates of market capacities.[73]

Thus, while Lockwood offers an approach which discriminates between a range of market and work situations among propertyless wage workers, and thus offers a powerful criticism of any simple claims about homogenisation of the conditions of such wage workers, he does not offer any adequate basis for his particular preoccupation with the dividing line between white-collar and manual workers. In principle his fine discrimination of the variations in the immediate class situations of such groups could focus attention on any number of points in the range of such situations, though this is less evident in his presentation than it would otherwise be because he concentrates on variations among white-collar workers and treats variations among manual workers only in passing. Of course Lockwood's focus corresponds with a conventional distinction, but it is not the only such distinction and its existence does not relieve the analyst of the responsibility of justifying his choice.

In fact Lockwood rescues his focus upon the manual/white-collar divide from apparent analytical arbitrariness by underlining the correspondence between this cut-off point and distinctive forms of consciousness and organisation.[74] Just as specific forms of consciousness cannot simply be regarded as false but must be seen as arising from distinctive class situations (as these are embellished by status discriminations), so the significance of particular demarcation lines in the range of class situations is demonstrated or affirmed by their correspondence with specific forms of consciousness. The fit between divisions of class situation and of consciousness validates both poles of the analysis. However, the inadequacy of such a procedure is exposed by the other major line of criticism which has been directed at Lockwood's Blackcoated Worker, for this has focussed on the weaknesses of his characterisation of distinctive patterns of consciousness corresponding to manual and white-collar groupings. Thus Bain, Coates and Ellis emphasise the complexity and diversity of forms of consciousness among both manual and white-collar workers; the mediated and limited relationship between forms of collective organisation and membership outlooks; and the overlaps and similarities in both unionism and social imagery between manual and clerical workers.[75] The impact of their critique has been weakened both by their polemical presentation, then demolition, of a quite crass, vulgar-weberian dimensional account of stratification, and by their tendency to make a series of discrete, overstated and

even incompatible critical points.[76] However their starting point of an omnibus process of job regulation does, despite its own deficiences, direct valuable attention to the problematical coherence and distinctiveness of manual and white-collar patterns of organisation and consciousness. Thus Crompton suggests that a more adequate analysis of the ambiguous class position of white-collar and managerial employees would address some of the features indicated by Bain and his colleagues by considering how "the heterogenous and ambiguous nature of the white-collar situation is reflected in heterogenous and often contradictory forms of collective representation".[77] In addition it should be added that the dynamics of the social organisation of production also sustain varied and contradictory forms of consciousness among manual workers, which are lost sight of in the stereotype of manual trade unionism which serves as Lockwood's comparative reference point; though this is a point which is only hinted at by Crompton given her concern with the specific contradictions arising from the ambiguous class location of the new middle class.

Of course, the whole enterprise of class analysis would be pointless were there no relationship between crucial divisions of class position and significant differences of organisation and consciousness among employees. However, this is very far from suggesting that established organisational and ideological divisions must point directly to the underlying significance of crucial points of cleavage in class relations. Such a claim, which is implicit in Lockwood's approach, would have to gloss over the importance of the limited, problematical and variable articulation of class interests by collectivities such as trade unions or in dominant elements of social imagery. In other words, the relativist approach to consciousness championed by Lockwood in the Blackcoated Worker appears to share with the absolutist view it attacks an inadequate consideration of the complex institutional mediation of consciousness and action: the absolutist viewpoint explains deviations in terms of distortion or psychological idiosyncracy, while the relativist viewpoint assumes a rather automatic and direct relation between situation and consciousness. The institutions which mediate class consciousness are presumed to 'work up' experience in an unproblematical manner, so that the analyst can extrapolate 'backwards' from extant patterns of collective activity and perspectives to class interests and situations.[78]

A final point which arises from this discussion of the 'fit' between class situations and their demarcation on one hand and characteristic forms of consciousness and organisation on the other concerns the implications of the use of 'ideal-type' constructions in this context. As Cousins suggests, such ideal-typification accentuates the coherence of both experience and consciousness as well as their mutual 'fit', and thus reinforces the attention given to the particular point of contrast chosen by the analyst as the basis for the typification, at the expense of attention to alternative comparisons or to the contradictions and dynamics of either class relations or forms of consciousness.[79] Given the dilemmas posed by the neo-weberian starting point, which generates a multitude of class situations and both counterposes and collapses class situation and community, the adjudication of class boundaries by a process of 'double fitting' which is crystalised in such ideal-types represents a relatively coherent development of the weberian project; but it is a development which embodies the difficulties of that project rather than transcending them. In abstracting a set of immediate interdependencies between class situations and consciousness they conceal from view the tensions and contradictory tendencies within, and the mediations and lacunae between, developing class relations on the one hand and specific forms of class mobilisation and consciousness on the other.

Such difficulties in the elaboration of a neo-weberian approach to class analysis remain inherent in Lockwood's brief discussion of work situation in the 1960 article which I discussed earlier, for that outline invites a similar juxtaposition of elements of work situation and extant worker consciousness. The special attention which Lockwood gives in that article to the round of social experience outside work, and its influence on the construction of social imagery and the demarcation of group or interactional boundaries, represents a real development of the study of the parochial mediation of work experience within particular social networks; and this development beyond the approach of the Blackcoated Worker is carried forward into the Luton study. However, without an analysis of the broader development of class relations as social relations of production, such concerns risk becoming an exercise in the demarcation of social groupings having an indeterminate or tenuous connection with class analysis. Related shortcomings arise from the fact that in Lockwood's article the sustained focus on the

immediate round of social experience is not accompanied by any systematic attempt to specify linkages to the general framework of social relations of production, within which both the immediate process of production and exchange relations, and major features of non-work institutions, are embedded. This feature, which can be seen to arise as much from Weber's individualist and indeed a-social conception of class/market situation as from Bott and others' concern with the moulding of perspectives from personal experience, marks the manner in which Lockwood counterposes the global economic trends emphasised by the embourgeoisement theorists to the study of the 'internal structural differentiation of the working class in sociological terms'. Thus the task of the sociological study of structural differentiation, as it is elaborated in that article, gives far more attention to patterns of relationship with workmates and immediate superiors and white-collar workers within work, and neighbours and kin outside, than it does to the agents and agencies which transmit and translate specific features of global economic and political trends and developments into local realities: especially the representatives of corporate capital, the upper echelons of capitalist management, but also trade union officialdom and national and local state policy makers. Once more this marks the tendency of such neo-weberian approaches to 'complete' a class analysis which has an impoverished, market-oriented, starting point by resort to community and interactional criteria, rather than any developed analysis of the particularisation and interplay of different aspects of the social relations of production.

A Concluding Assessment of MacKenzie's Characterisation

At this point it is possible to make a final assessment of MacKenzie's discussion of the antecedents of the Luton study. Firstly he claims that "in their theoretical writings prior to the actual fieldwork, the two senior researchers, John Goldthorpe and David Lockwood, adhered to a clear and unambiguous view of the nature of social class and class structure ... according to this perspective, for the majority of any population, i.e. those not owning productive wealth, position in the division of labour is seen as being the crucial determinant of class situation, while community and family structure are accorded secondary importance."[80] I hope that my discussion will have shown that this characterisation overstates both the coherence of the analysis and the priority which it assigns to work relations. Invocation of 'position in the division of labour' glosses

over the shifts of emphasis and analytical dilemmas which I have discussed; and its vagueness conceals both the limitations of the Lockwoodian treatment of work and the drift towards community and interactional criteria for making crucial demarcation decisions within the overall weberian framework. It also implies that the earlier writings of Goldthorpe and Lockwood contain developed analyses of the manner in which "community and family structure are shaped by the industrial and therefore the occupational structure of a particular area" since this is a key feature of the analysis of the division of labour recommended by MacKenzie, but despite this recommendation neither he nor they provide such an analysis.[81]

These points have important implications for his second claim, that the Affluent Worker monographs represented a major retreat from this well developed approach to class analysis. In contrast to this assessment I wish to emphasise the following features. First, there was a real continuity in the general approach to class analysis from the Blackcoated Worker through to the crucial programmatic statements of the Affluent Worker project. Second, this continuity is clearly visible in terms of the weberian framework of market situations, concomitant work conditions, and the tracing of contours of class division in terms of processes of social closure and interaction. Third, this framework, as I have outlined it, is a more appropriate characterisation of the Goldthorpe and Lockwood position than is MacKenzie's invocation of 'role in the division of labour'. Finally, changes in the focus of the different essays can best be seen as different attempts to develop, and to repair the deficiencies of, this weberian approach. From this perspective the development of the Affluent Worker project itself within this weberian framework, with shifts of emphasis and limitations which relate to that framework, involves continuities with the earlier writings on social class and class structure rather more than detours and dilutions; and the limitations of the project relate to those continuities rather more than to any loss of direction. It is to these continuities and limitations that I now intend to turn, looking first at the development of the general analysis of the Affluent Worker in the class structure as it developed from the initial 1963 article to the final monograph, and then at the supposed major detour of the interventions within industrial sociology, from the reports on the Vauxhall car workers to the monograph on 'industrial attitudes and behaviour'.[82]

chapter 1:footnotes

1 David Lockwood "The 'New Working Class'" European Journal of Sociology 1, 1960.

2 MacKenzie 'Affluent Worker Study" p 242 and p 247.

3 Gavin MacKenzie The Aristocracy of Labor Cambridge 1973.

4 These formulations are drawn from Richard Brown "Sources of Objectives in Work and Employment" in John Child (ed) Man and Organisation London 1973 and Frank Bechhofer "The Relationship between Technology and Shop-floor Behaviour" in D.O. Edge and J.N. Wolfe (eds) Meaning and Control London 1973.

5 John Goldthorpe "The Social Action Approach" J. Management Studies 7, 1970.

6 Westergaard "Rediscovery of Cash Nexus"; and Huw Beynon and Theo Nichols "Modern British Sociology and the Affluent Worker" unpublished 1972.

7 Beynon and Nichols "Modern British Sociology" p 23.

8 John Goldthorpe and David Lockwood "Affluence and the British Class Structure" Sociological Review 11, 1963 p157.

9 Ibid pp 133-4.

10 Giddens Class Structure; Crompton and Gubbay Economy and Class Structure; Binns Beyond the Sociology of Conflict; Clarke Marx, Marginalism.

11 H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds) From Max Weber London 1948, pp 181-2.

12 Ibid p 182.

13 Max Weber Theory of Social and Economic Organisation New York 1947 pp 424-425.

14 From Max Weber pp 184, 183.

15 Ibid p 190.

16 Ibid p 192.

17 Ibid p 193-4. This passage is quoted by among others Reinhart Bendix "Inequality and Social Structure" American Sociological Review 39, 1974, and J.E.T. Eldridge "Industrial Relations and Industrial Capitalism" in Geoff Esland et al. (eds) People and Work Edinburgh 1975.

18 Giddens Class Structure p80.

19 From Max Weber p 182.

20 Theory of Social and Economic Organisation p 427.

21 Compare Giddens Class Structure pp 42-43 and Crompton and Gubbay Economy pp 8-9.

22 Karl Marx Capital III Moscow 1959 p 886.

23 Giddens Class Structure p 78.

24 Crompton and Gubbay Economy pp17 and 20.

25 Theory of Social and Economic Organisation p 424.

26 Ibid p 424.

27 Giddens Class/Structure p 48.

28 Theory of Social and Economic Org p 425.

29 Anthony Giddens Capitalism and Modern Social Theory Cambridge 1971 p 165.

30 Theory of Social and Economic Org p 429.

31 Giddens Class Structure p 79.

32 Clarke Marx, Marginalism; and also Binns Beyond Sociology of Conflict; Bryn Jones "Max Weber and the Concept of Social Class" Sociological Review 25, 1975; and Goran Therborn Science, Class and Society london 1976.

33 Clarke Marx, Marginalism ch 7; see also Binns Beyond Sociology of Conflict who claims "an unwarranted and unjustified theoretical transposition of this rationality from its original sense as a historically specific form of action to the level of a system as a whole takes place in Weber's analysis" p 11

34 Jones "Max Weber" pp 739-741 and footnote 27

35 Clarke Marx, Marginalism

36 Theory of Social and Economic Organisation p 247.

37 Ibid pp 184-5;212;247-248;426-427.

38 Ibid pp220-221.

39 Jones "Max Weber" pp748 and 732.

40 From Max Weber p 148.

41 see Crompton and Gubbay Economy chapter 3 and also Binns Beyond Sociology of Conflict chapters 2 and 3.

42 Parkin Marxism and Class Theory p113.

43 Giddens Class Structure pp 105-107.

44 Crompton and Gubbay Economy pp 35-39.

45 Ibid pp 39-40. Note however that Crompton and Gubbay overstate the absence of attention to production in Weber. It is the manner in which he theorises production as an inevitable concomitant of rational calculation which is critical.

46 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence" esp pp 157-159 and David Lockwood The Blackcoated Worker London 1958 esp pp 13-16 and 201-213.

47 See for example Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 154-155, where false consciousness is discussed.

48 See my concluding remarks in this chapter.

49 MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Study" comes close to this position as has already been seen.

50 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence".

51 Lockwood Blackcoated Worker and "New Working Class".

52 see Geoffrey Ingham "Social Stratification: Individual Attributes and Social Relationships" Sociology 1970, as well as Giddens Class Structure and Jones "Max Weber".

53 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence" p 157

54 Ibid p 157

55 Ibid p 158

56 Ibid p 159

57 Ibid p 159

58 Ibid p 158

59 Ibid p 157

60 The quote is from From Max Weber p 301 and the full sentence makes quite clear the manner in which this is subsumed under market situation.

61 As MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Study" has argued, as noted above.

62 Lockwood "New Working Class" p 249.

63 Ibid p 251.

64 Ibid pp 252 and 255.

65 David Lockwood "Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society" Sociological Review 14, 1966 explicitly acknowledges the debt to Bott in the opening paragraph. Of course Bott's formulation in Family and Social Network (London 1957) must have become influential in the context of the synthesis of the work of Centers, Popitz, Willener and Hoggart developed in the late 1950's by Dahrendorf, Lockwood and others. See in particular Ralf Dahrendorf Class and Class Conflict pp 280-289, and the overview in Howard H. Davis Beyond Class Images London 1979.

66 Lockwood "New Working Class" pp 256-257.

67 Ibid pp 256-7, cited in MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Study" pp 238-239.

68 Lockwood "New Working Class" p 254.

69 Lockwood Blackcoated Worker introduction and conclusion outline the conceptual framework, while the quote about status appears on p 209.

70 Ibid pp 15-16.

71 Rosemary Crompton "Approaches to the Study of White-collar Unionism" Sociology 10, 1976 pp 409-410; see also Crompton and Gubbay Economy pp 20-23.

72 Presentations and appraisals of marxian analyses of the new middle class include Crompton "Approaches"; Eric Olin Wright Class, Crisis and the State London 1978, chapter 2; Richard Hyman "White-collar Workers and Theories of Class" in Richard Hyman and Robert Price (eds) The New Working Class? White-collar Workers and their Organisations London 1983; and Abercrombie and Urry Middle Classes. It should be noted that feminist studies and critiques have underlined the centrality of gender divisions in white-collar work and the critical implications of this for both weberian and marxian class analyses. See for examples Fiona McNally Women For Hire London 1979; Evelyn N. Glenn and Roslyn L. Feldberg "Proletarianising Clerical Work" in Andrew Zimbalist (ed) Case Studies on the Labor Process New York 1979; and Rosemary Crompton and Gareth Jones "Clerical 'Proletarianisation': Myth or Reality?" in Graham Day et al (eds) Diversity and Decomposition in the Labour Market Aldershot 1982.

73 This is a feature of Weber's analysis which is glossed over by Crompton and Gubbay Economy. See footnote 45.

74 It is noteworthy that more recently Parkin has clearly stated some of the objections to this commonsense division and its assumed correspondence with distinctive strategies, in Marxism and Class Theory pp 11-15.

75 George Bain et al Social Stratification and Trade Unionism London 1973, chapters 3 and 4.

76 See Crompton "Approaches" p 412, and also Tony Elger, review of Bain et al, Sociology 1974.

77 Crompton "Approaches".

78 Some of the difficulties which arise over the imputation of class interests have been explored in the work of Stephen Lukes and the

debate surrounding his work, while these arguments have converged with explorations of the notion of 'radical needs'. These debates lead away from a simple juxtaposition of proclaimed and imputed (real) interests towards a location of the varied and contradictory priorities and needs which are embedded within specific social relations of domination and exploitation. For the discussions of Lukes's formulation see Stephen Lukes Power: a Radical View London 1974; Alan Bradshaw "Critical Note: A Critique of Lukes" Sociology 10, 1976; Ted Benton "'Objective' Interests and the Sociology of Power" Sociology 15, 1981; and P.K. Edwards and Hugh Scullion The Social Organisation of Industrial Conflict Oxford 1982, esp. pp 7-9. For the discussion of 'radical needs' set against immediate class interests see Michael Burawoy Manufacturing Consent 1979 and Agnes Heller The Theory of Need in Marx London 1976.

79 J.M. Cousins "Some Problems in the Concept of the 'Proletariat'" Mens en Maatschappij 46 1971.

80 MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Study" p 238.

81 Ibid p 242.

82 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker in the Class Structure; Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence"; John Goldthorpe "Attitudes and Behaviour of Car Assembly Workers" British Journal of Sociology 17, 1966; and John Goldthorpe et al The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour Cambridge 1968.

Chapter 2

Problems in the Analysis of the 'Affluent Worker'

In the previous chapter I traced two key elements in Weber's schematic essays and in later neo-weberian class analyses. The first was the grounding of weberian analyses in variations of market situation, with immediate production relations reduced at best to a series of concomitants of those market situations. The second concerned attempts to solve problems of class boundaries arising from this starting point by appeal to criteria of closure, community and consciousness -- which both undermined the clarity of the notion of class situation and compromised any analysis of a problematical relation between class location and organisation and consciousness. Together these features imply that weberian class analysis, severed from any discussion of the dynamics of the social relations of production, threatens to become merely an exercise in the demarcation of occupational and status group boundaries.

In this chapter I wish to consider the role of such features of neo-weberian class analysis within the Affluent Worker project itself. This means that I will approach the publications of the project from this distinctive viewpoint. Thus my discussion should not be taken to indicate a failure to recognise the pioneering character of the research. I also recognise that the researchers' choice of data and analytical strategy were inevitably influenced by specific features of the arguments deployed by their initial and major protagonists, the proponents of the embourgeois-ment thesis. However, it is clearly the case that the critique of that thesis mounted by Goldthorpe and Lockwood, and the conduct of their research, was not simply structured by the views of their opponents. They were, after all, quite prepared to elaborate and reinterpret what was involved in the claims of those opponents, and the manner in which they did so was structured by their own positive neo-weberian commitments. These commitments emerge clearly in the crucial analytical arguments of the Affluent Worker project, organised around the conceptual framework of economic, normative and relational aspects of class formation, and they are also evident in the positive diagnosis based on those arguments, that of the independent convergence of affluent workers towards instrumental collectivism.

These critical arguments and positive theses were clearly outlined in the programmatic article by Goldthorpe and Lockwood,

published in 1963, and indeed many of these themes were already summarised in Lockwood's earlier article on 'the new working class', and they were carried forward to structure the design and interpretation of the fieldwork itself. Thus in the first section of the chapter I will trace out both the conceptual framework and the substantive argument from its original statement in the earlier articles to the final version in the final Affluent Worker monograph, looking in turn at the treatment of economic, relational and normative aspects and at the overall diagnosis of independant convergence on instrumental collectivism.

While the continuities in analysis from 1960 to 1969 emphasise the durability of their analytical framework and the success with which the earlier papers prefigured the research findings which were interpreted within that framework, there were, of course, some significant shifts of focus over the period of empirical research and analysis. In particular there was a definite shift of polemical focus from debate with embourgeoisement theorists to a concern to contest the claims of a variety of neo-marxists. However, while their engagement with both their own empirical material and these marxian authors occasioned an elaboration of the analytical argument about the interplay of economic, normative and relational features of class formation, and also prompted additional comments on the political implications of the analysis, it is notable, too, that Goldthorpe and Lockwood saw their new opponents as committing almost identical analytical follies to those of the embourgeoisement theorists. Thus the consequences of their engagement with marxism were minimised by this mapping of marxian arguments onto their established terrain of debate, though it is possible to detect a less dogmatic diagnosis of the implications of instrumental collectivism in their final monograph which may owe as much to this engagement as to the empirical material. One question which this raises concerns how far the particular variants of neo-marxist analysis considered by Goldthorpe and Lockwood are of a form which justifies this amalgamation of both groups under a common rubric and critique of economic and technical determinism, or how far such an amalgamation arose primarily from the particular neo-weberian template adopted by the Luton authors, and did

less than justice to the specific character of marxian arguments even of that particular vintage. Some attention will be given to this question, as well as to the character of the authors' political strategy recommendations, toward the end of this chapter.

The economic aspect of class: market situation and its workplace concomitants

At the heart of the Goldthorpe and Lockwood critique of the embourgeoisement thesis are the distinctions between economic, normative and relational aspects of class stratification which are grounded in the considerations outlined in their 'conceptual note'. Many of the proponents of the thesis merely asserted a relationship between affluence and styles of life or political choice without any real concern with a sociological analysis of class, so Goldthorpe and Lockwood have to impose their analytical framework to demonstrate what <u>they</u> regard as the necessary implications and hidden assumptions of that thesis. The substance of their critique and of their more positive argument can be traced in part under the headings of the economic, normative and relational aspects of class, though this will lead into consideration of the manner in which they are seen to be related.

Under the heading of the economic aspect of class the major reservation voiced by Goldthorpe and Lockwood concerns the narrow manner in which it is defined by the commentators on affluence. In 'Affluence and the British Class Structure' they argue that "the predominant concern with the effects of affluence has directed attention towards incomes and consumption and away from other no less significant correlates of the individual's position and role in the division of labour"[1]. In line with the neo-weberian emphasis on market situation this provides a basis for focussing on job security, fringe benefits and prospects for advancement, as well as income, in characterising the economic situation of manual and non-manual workers. Within this wider perspective they then note two features which undermine the assumption of parity between these two categories of workers: firstly that there are continuing differences in these respects between them, with white-collar workers still advantaged; and secondly that for manual workers

higher wages often go with worse, rather than better, job security or promotion prospects.[2] However, though this involves a more inclusive conception of the economic than that of the embourgeoisement theorists, what is most remarkable about this aspect of their formulation of their critique is that the positive argument itself remains so narrow, focussing only on features which would have fallen within Lockwood's earlier conception of market situation. Of course, the research project itself considered other "correlates of the individual's position and role within the division of labour" particularly in the context of variations in technology, and such correlates are explicitly discussed elsewhere: work discipline is mentioned as such in the 'notes on concepts' appended to the 1963 article; there is an extended discussion of plant size and production technologies as bases of differences of experience among manual workers in the B.S.A. conference paper which was the precursor of that article; and the rehearsal of the 1963 arguments in the final research publication defines such correlates slightly more broadly when it notes that "the work situation of white-collar employees is still generally superior to that of manual wage earners in terms of working conditions and amenities, continuity of employment, fringe benefits, long-term income prospects and promotion chances".[3] I wish to suggest that the particularly narrow treatment of the economic in the 1963 paper is associated with the deployment of the notion of the relational aspect of class in such a way as to include in a particular and limited way facets of work relations. The scope of the relational aspect of class will be considered shortly, but for the moment I wish to note that at most the economic includes production conditions as concomitants of market situations and capacities (an inclusion which has been seen to be consistent with Weber's schema); that the codification of the argument in published form in the 1963 article limited attention to the market situation per se; and that these oscillations of usage, including the manner in which the relational cross-cuts the economic, are symptomatic of some of the dilemmas of weberian analysis discussed earlier.

As has been noted a possible rejoinder to any criticism of the limitation of Goldthorpe and Lockwood's treatment of the economic aspect of class might point to their treatment of the relational aspect. Certainly the argument under this heading is of central importance to the authors' position, for in spelling out questions which are hardly touched on explicitly by their opponents they also specify some of the

central features of their own alternative understanding of social class. The central theme of their discussion of the relational, in both the 1963 paper and the later monograph, is that established patterns of status segregation in formal and informal neighbourhood social relations cannot simply be assumed to wither away in the face of merging income levels or even converging consumption patterns and aspirations. This theme is codified in their discussion of the steps from affluence to aspirations to assimilation which they argue would have to follow for real embourgeoisement, and both there and elsewhere in their discussion continuing status exclusiveness is seen as the crucial nail in the coffin of the embourgeoisement thesis.[4] This is a quite logical consequence of a commitment to the weberian notion of social class, where, as has been seen, the distinction between class as market situation and status communities is relaxed so that status inclusion and exclusion can serve to demarcate significant class boundaries. Thus one strand of the anti-embourgeoisement argument rests on the centrality of this theme of exclusion, a theme re-emphasised by the authors' choice of quotations to point up their major contentions: from Marshall they quote "the essence of social class is the way in which a man is treated by his fellows (and reciprocally, the way he treats them)", and from Guttsman "we might look at social classes as groups within which people meet and marry; the divisions are real if there are barriers to free social intercourse between individuals".[5] However, while this argument about status exclusion at large is strongly emphasised it is accompanied by a more specific argument about the nature of workplace social relations which, as has been noted, comes to subsume all discussion of the work situation in the 1963 article.

This more positive and specific argument forms a bridge between two different emphases in the Goldthorpe and Lockwood discussion of relational aspects of class: one which sees relations of inclusion and exclusion as the ultimate moments of class formation, and one which sees the network of immediate social relations as the parameters of class experience and consciousness. The discussion focusses upon the persistence in work relations of a specific structural basis for the perpetuation of established patterns of status segregation, and it deserves to be quoted at length:

> "we would wish to draw attention to the importance of one particular issue which should, perhaps, be made the focal point of enquiry; that is, the extent to which differences in status in the occupational or work milieu carry over into community and

associational contexts, and exert an influence here on the structuring of social relationships. Within industry, status distinctions and status segregation are generally more explicit and more institutionalised than in most other areas of social life. The line of cleavage that is most apparent and most resistant to change is that between manual and non-manual employees - that is the line between 'shop' and 'office' or 'works' and 'staff'. Basically, the difference here is between those who are placed in essentially subordinate positions within the industrial organisation and those who are to some extent or other associated with the exercise of authority. But related to this, of course, a whole range of further differentiation chiefly concerning privileges and amenities of various kinds about the plant - canteens, clubs, time-keeping arrangements, etc. Thus, even the most inferior clerk or technician, who may in fact have a minimal degree of authority, is set apart, both literally and symbolically, from the rank-and-file manual worker. An important question is, therefore, whether outside of the industrial setting this status gap can, under certain conditions at least, be nullified by other factors - similarities of income and life-style for example - or whether it is likely to persist as a major barrier to social intercourse on the basis of equality. To what extent does it occur, for instance, that the wages clerk and the welder, who eat in different canteens at lunch time, meet each other with their wives for a drink or a meal together in the evening ?"[6]

Here, then, there <u>is</u> a further discussion of some of the distinctive features of manual and white-collar work. It emphasises the compulsory character of status distinctions at work, echoing Lockwood's earlier point that "work relations are unavoidable, daily impressing upon the individual a consciousness of differential power and prestige", and on that basis provides a firmer structural anchorage for the argument that status inclusions and exclusions beyond the workplace will continue to operate at the manual/white-collar boundary[7]. Thus some of the difficulties of an emphasis on status groupings in rounding out the weberian notion of social class are limited by focussing on such groupings within the workplace. This appears to overcome the apparent arbitrariness of such groupings and to address the social relations of production explicitly.

However, it should be apparent that this discussion of status distinctions in the workplace repairs these omissions and difficulties

only in a very partial manner, as it goes only slightly beyond the mere description of patterns of status distinction and social distance. The concern with status boundaries is projected back into the workplace, where status distinctions appear as both concomitants of particular market situations and bases for the clustering of such situations in social classes. However, the relation of these boundaries to the broader social relations between labour and capital and to the logic of organisation of 'roles in the division of labour' is unconsidered. Thus, though Goldthorpe and Lockwood refer to authority relations as the substantial bases for status distinctions the argument is both sketchy and equivocal: while 'association with the exercise of authority' is referred to it is also argued that white-collar workers without any real authority may also enjoy status prerogatives. This leaves open a crucial question posed at the end of Lockwood's earlier treatment of the work and status situation of white-collar workers, in the Blackcoated Worker:

> "one of the most interesting problems of the immediate future is whether this [status] division is one that is built on traditional social values that will slowly 'wither away', or whether it is more basically derived from the social relations of modern industry and is, therefore, not so much supported by estimates of social worth already disappearing as by the inescapable conditions of daily existance"[8].

There is, then, no real explanation of the 'explicit and institutionalised' character of status discriminations in industry. Such an explanation, incorporating a more specific discussion of the ramifications of authority relationships for the varied categories of white-collar workers, would have to address the underlying dynamic of the broader social relation which is lost sight of in the discussion of immediate exclusions and inclusions, that between capital and wage workers. How are specific roles in the division of labour organised and reorganised by top corporate management, and how do status prerogatives interplay with cash and job-security considerations in the recruitment of different groups of workers, and the control of them and the production process by capital? What appears remarkable about the overall discussion of the relational aspect of class, then, is precisely the lack of attention to the social relations of capital with the various categories of workers discussed, to complement and qualify the exclusive preoccupation with the immediate status dynamics of the relations between manual and clerical workers within and outside work. In this respect the judgement of Beynon and

Nichols appears over-generous when they argue that "class expresses a relation. An awareness of this was evidenced in an early paper by the two senior Cambridge authors, which spelt out economic, normative and relational aspects ('Affluence and the British Class Structure'). However, the major empirical work the team produced placed much greater stress on the normative and, in the limited sense of social interaction, relational aspects than upon the economic. In this way they effectively masked the nature of class as an ongoing system of domination.[9]" For while, as will be seen, this represents a fair assessment of the final research, it is fairly clear that in that early essay any sense of broader social relations of production was absent: employment was conceptualised in terms of income and non-income returns corresponding to distinct market situations, while production was seen in terms of the play of status inclusions and exclusions within the workplace. How, then are these features of the analysis developed and modified in the final discussion in the Affluent Worker in the Class Structure ?

The first point to make about the empirical research concerns the evidence marshalled about the market situations of manual and clerical workers. While market situation is at the heart of the analytical approach developed by Goldthorpe and Lockwood the material on market and work situations remains remarkably sketchy, especially as a basis not merely for the repudiation of embourgeoisement but for some more positive alternative diagnosis such as that of independent convergence. In this chapter I will focus on the treatment of the economic aspect of class formation in the final monograph of the project, where the material is marshalled with direct reference to class analysis (in particular by focussing on a comparison of manual and clerical workers), while the earlier monograph on 'industrial attitudes and behaviour' will be considered in the following chapter. This is appropriate both because the final monograph is the one concerned specifically with class analysis and because, as will be seen in chapter 3, the problems pinpointed there are not resolved or compensated for in the earlier intervention into 'industrial sociology'.

Consideration of the market situations of the workers studied during the Luton project involves giving attention to two different aspects of the project. First there is the selection of a research setting and sample which themselves embody or define particular labour market parameters. Secondly, there is the investigation of the

particular circumstances of the different groups of workers as a basis for internal comparisons of the market situations within the sample. The research strategy, of a search for and investigation of a critical test case for the embourgeoisement and independant convergence theses, involved the specification of a research site according to a series of criteria stipulated under the headings of 'social characteristics of the population of workers', 'characteristics of the industrial setting' and 'characteristics of the community setting'. These criteria included relatively high wages, economic security, advanced technology, 'progressive' employment and industrial relations policies and economic expansion, which together go some way to defining the specific market situation of these workers.[10] This procedure is quite consonant not only with the testing of the crude embourgeoisement thesis, but also with the reduction of production relations to a series of discrete concomitants of market situations in weberian analysis. However, a major problem with this approach was that this collection of individual, corporate and aggregate characteristics was simply treated as a series of discrete parameters -- givens from the point of view of the analysis -- rather than being theorised in any way as a constellation of interrelated processes and aspects of class location. One important feature which the authors' did note was that the various criteria they had stipulated did not necessarily cluster together:

> "for example, among those types of workers who would qualify as 'affluent' there proved to be a relatively large number who in fact received their high wages in return for work which was physically unpleasant and stressful, if not actually hazardous, and which was also in some cases irregular -- thus giving rise to marked fluctuations in earnings."[11]

This point served as a background to the related argument, well made within the focus on the market nexus, about the less marked but still real costs associated with high wages -- notably monotony, shiftwork and overtime -- for the workers in the sample itself. However, it did not prompt any real consideration of the manner in which the positive characteristics looked for <u>were</u> interrelated for the Luton workers. Thus there was little exploration of the relationships between general economic expansion and a "situation of chronic labour shortage"; specific corporate strategies of recruitment, personnel management and the manning and organisation of production; and the manner in which workers have individually and collectively engaged with both labour market and

capitalist managements.[12] In addition this procedure, of the stipulation of discrete exigencies without any apparent concern for the broader logic of their interrelation or disjunction, would seem to underpin the authors' willingness to make quite ad hoc and superficial decisions concerning choice of enterprises; their ostensibly agnostic inclusion of varied production technologies; and also the disappearance from consideration of the small scale employers who had been pinpointed as of critical importance in an earlier paper.[13]

A final point about the formulation of criteria for a critical test case, and one which forms a link with discussion of the internal comparisons of market situations to be found in the final monograph, concerns the selection of the sample of white-collar workers who serve as a point of comparison with the various groups of manual workers. These workers appear to have been selected simply as a convenient control group from the same setting as the manual workers rather than in relation to the trends and processes highlighted as potentially significant in the discussion of instrumental collectivism. It certainly remains unclear how far these workers, "men in all the main clerical grades in the Skefko and Laporte establishments", were experiencing the processes of rationalisation and routinisation presumed to conduce towards instrumental collectivism: what is reported is that trade unionism was minimal among these clerks.[14] It is true that the authors' recognise some of the limitations of their white-collar data, in terms of sample size and a shorter interview schedule than that addressed to the manual workers, and thus seek to use it only where it "can be taken as illustrating already well-documented features of white-collar social attitudes and behaviour", but in so doing they, like the embourgeoisement theorists, tend to treat the white-collar worker as a fixed point against which to measure the movement of manual workers and they thus undermine any opportunity properly to examine their own positive thesis.[15] The real character of the white-collar 'world of work', in terms of the clerks' experience of the interplay of management personnel, promotion and work organisation policies, remains particularly opaque even in comparison with the description of the combination of conditions surrounding the experience of the manual workers in the Luton firms.

Turning now to the specific depiction of the economic situations of the different groups of workers, the central theme advanced in the chapter on the 'world of work' has already been noted, namely that these affluent manual workers had gained higher wages at the expense of increased deprivations in terms of work pace, monotony, long hours arising from routine overtime and shiftwork, so that they continued to occupy the distinctive market nexus of the manual worker compared with the clerk:

> "Affluence had been achieved only at a price: that of accepting work which affords little in the way of intrinsic rewards and which is likely to be experienced essentially as <u>labour</u> -- as the expenditure of effort motivated simply by the extrinsic reward of payment. Indeed, one could say that many of these men have gained their 'middle class' incomes and standards of living through taking and holding down jobs which offer higher pay than most types of manual work <u>because of</u> the stresses and deprivations they impose: because, that is, they imply a kind of work experience that contrasts particularly sharply with that characteristic of the white-collar clerk, technician or administrator."[16]

Here, then, it is claimed that a quite clear market situation unites these manual workers and sets them apart from white-collar workers. Certainly the authors' concern with a more rounded account of the market situation of these workers has led them to underline in a valuable fashion the trade-offs confronting these workers. However, within the terms of discussion of market situations this argument is by no means satisfactory as a demonstration of the overriding significance of a class boundary between manual and clerical workers, for it both glosses over real differences in the market situations of the manual workers themselves and depends on an exaggerated contrast conception of the clerk.

Even within the terms of the authors' own evidence the situation of the craftsmen presents difficulties for their account, for it is clear that their market capacity and life chances are somewhat differentiated from those of other manual workers.[17] Their earnings range higher than those of other groups, they are not normally subjected to shiftwork and their work itself is less routinised and controlled. Thus the characterisation of craftsmen is of particular significance for the position adopted by Goldthorpe et al. and needs to be quoted at some length:

"The craftsmen clearly had opportunity in their work for the exercise of skill, judgement and initiative -- far more so than the semi-skilled men; yet within this group over half claimed that their jobs did not absorb their full attention, discontent over methods of supervision and work organisation was widespread, and just under half reported having had at least one previous job that they had found more likeable. In interpreting this situatiom, one important clue is provided by the nature of the jobs to which these latter respondents referred. With few exceptions, these were jobs which, in one way or another, were of a less restricted and routinised character than the ones they and their fellow craftsmen at present performed; for example, maintenance jobs in relatively small firms in which they 'had to do everything' or were given a 'roving commission', or toolmaking jobs in which they had worked closely with development engineers or designers. In Skefko and Laporte, however, as in large-scale plants generally, even skilled work is subjected to the logic of specialisation and bureaucratic control, and in this way the autonomy of craftsmen and their opportunities for applying their skills are inevitably curtailed. When this is borne in mind, then, the grievances and frustration expressed by the men we interviewed become somewhat easier to understand, At the same time, though, it proves to be the case that only 2 out of the 56 craftsmen stated that they preferred a previous job on account of the better pay it had offerred, while two-thirds mentioned the high level of pay as a factor attaching them to their present jobs. In other words, it would appear that in much the same way as with the assemblers and machinists, the craftsmen in our sample have been prepared to sacrifice, or to forgo, work satisfactions of an immediate kind in order to maximise their economic gain. And it may well be that because of their craft training, the <u>relative</u> deprivation that they thus experience is <u>greater</u> than that of men for whom it is easier to accomodate to the idea of work as an almost exclusively instrumental activity."[18]

Now this passage provides a fuller indication of the market niche occupied by the craftsmen than any offered to characterise the positions of the other categories of workers, perhaps because craft training and organisation define a relatively coherent market position, but it also exposes several weaknesses in the <u>Affluent Worker</u> analysis. The first point to note is that evidence about attitudes is deployed to

characterise orientations of workers and these orientations themselves serve as proxies for a more direct examination of market situations. Thus the positions of craftsmen and other manual workers are seen as equivalent because they each have to trade-off high wages and work deprivations, that is they have to "'buy' their affluence in an essentially similar manner", though it is also clear that the level at which they make this trade-off is different.[19] Indeed, in the final sentence this difference of 'level' is made to underline the similarity of situation by arguing that craft workers expect more and thus experience greater 'relative derivation'. But this characterisation glosses over the point that these greater expectations are grounded in a genuinely somewhat advantaged position, and that in that context the articulation of greviances about "supervision and work organisation" are likely to remain active not just as experiences of relative derivation but in practices which serve to protect that position. In this context the transformation of skilled work in the plants under study does have ramifications for the wider labour market situation of craftsmen. However, these can be properly understood only by considering the interplay between labour process and labour market. They cannot justify the way in which Goldthorpe et al ignore the continuing relative distinctiveness of the market position of such workers, any more than they justify MacKenzie's regret that "'proper' craftsmen had not been studied.[20] Generally, what happens in the discussion of manual workers in the Affluent Worker study is that there is an oscillation between arguments which emphasise that workers confront a common range of choices within a confined labour market -- as indicated nicely in relation to work at Vauxhall or Laporte in the quote 'of course, you could make more at Vauxhall, but life here is just that much easier'[21] -- and analyses that emphasise the choice of more money for more deprivation at whatever particular level in the manual labour market -- as in the treatment of the situations of craftsmen and assemblers as equivalent. This oscillation tends to obscure the significant differences in market situation which remain even among manual workers and which would undermine the singular focus on the manual/non-manual divide within a coherent weberian analysis.

In important respects Goldthorpe and his associates are able to sustain the contrast between manual workers on the one hand and clerical workers on the other, despite the difficulties alluded to in the

previous paragraph, because they emphasise the essential contrast between the horizontal labour markets of the manual workers, which define cash/deprivation trade-offs, and the vertical career pathways of white-collar workers, where gains on all fronts can apparently occur simultaneously. "While in the white-collar world the achievement of higher pay is usually associated with taking on a more complex, autonomous and responsible job, something like the reverse of this has been the typical experience of the manual workers we studied."[22] However, this characterisation, too, appears to involve an overdrawn contrast, for three main reasons evident in their own results. Firstly a limited range of job ladders clearly exist for some categories of manual workers, not just in the minimal terms involved in the movement of a line worker off the line, but also in such more substantial progression as that involved in the movement from machinist to setter to foreman. This latter pattern not only underpinned a rather more optimistic assessment of promotion chances among setters than among the other manual workers, but also prompted the following judgement from Goldthorpe et al:

> "with the setters, the fact of their promotion from the ranks of machinists appears to be crucial. This upgrading has meant not only a higher rate of pay but, at the same time, more opportunity for these men to satisfy expressive needs -- to use skills, exercise initiative and so on -- in a way which their previous jobs did not permit."[23]

Secondly it is evident that even among the rather heterogenous clerical sample some clerks confront quite limited promotion opportunities: thus at least a third of their white-collar workers rated their chances of promotion to supervisor "not too good" at best. Finally, looking at the manual worker sample as a whole twenty-five per cent had had some previous white-collar, supervisory or sales employment experience, again suggesting that the manual and white-collar labour markets are not as clearly differentiated as the neat contrast quoted earlier implies.[24]

Thus the evidence produced by the Luton study clearly documents some of the deprivations associated with affluence among manual workers, and thus provides a basis for repudiating any embourgeoisement diagnosis which supposed that such trade-offs did not exist. However, it is less successful in carrying forward the positive theoretical argument and diagnosis of convergence mounted in the programmatic articles. While it is this study which can be said, in a real sense, to have discovered the labour market for British sociology, the empirical material on

the market situations of these workers is quite sketchy.[25] There is little direct evidence about the complexities of particular labour market niches, the manner in which these might be being restructured as the cumulative outcome of the initiatives of corporate decision makers, or the manner in which workers operate within them. Rather there is a persistant tendency to substitute a generalised contrast of instrumental and bureaucratic orientations which glosses over both the internal differences among the situations of manual workers and some overlaps between them and clerical workers. This argument receives its most florid formulation towards the end of the discussion, in the following terms:

> "little qualitative change at all may have occurred in the <u>class situation</u> of the affluent worker -- in the sense, that is, of the position he holds within the social organisation of production and the constraints and life-chances that he consequently experiences. The workers who make up our critical case were still men who gained their living through placing their labour power at the disposal of an employer and receiving payment for particular amounts of work done. Indeed, the way in which they had typically become affluent was in effect by devaluing the possibilities of non-economic rewards in employment and by working in jobs that offered a relatively high level of pay in return for a corresponding level of stress and deprivation: in other words, by being prepared to experience their work <u>as labour and as little else</u>."[26]

What this passage does is to appropriate marxian terminology about the purchase and sale of labour power (a notable feature in this final monograph where debate with marxism was becoming increasingly central) but without following out the analytical implications of that notion in terms of transformations and conflicts within the labour process or in terms of the character and determination of the wage.[27] Rather it moves directly from the characterisation of labour power, which would embrace both clerical and manual workers, to affluent workers as exemplars, which would exclude not only clerical workers but manual workers ranged anywhere else but at the far 'instrumental' end of the wage/deprivation trade-off. Thus it offers no coherent or consistent treatment of the class location of the workers under study. In this context the dilemmas about class demarcation posed within a rigorous development of a neo-weberian class analysis are not really confronted but are glossed over by an appeal to overdrawn ideal-type contrasts.

These features of the Affluent Worker analysis will be followed up in more detail in the next chapter, which considers the specifically 'industrial' studies more closely, but since they concern such a pivotal part of the analysis -- the characterisation of the class situations of clerk and manual worker from which the analysis of class formation in relational and normative terms proceeds -- they deserve some elaboration here. The crucial point is that the notion of 'labour power' is used rhetorically within a model of individual choice in (rather inadequately conceptualised and empirically ill-defined) labour markets. However, within such a model the social relations involved in the production process, set in motion with the purchase of labour power, become reduced to a trade-off in the market place, where workers can opt for relatively higher pay for higher stress and deprivation or (presumably) relatively lower pay for lower stress and deprivation. This focus has two critical consequences: firstly it fails to address the conflicts inherent in the very process of the transformation of labour power into profitable labour; and secondly, despite attention to the distinctive choices and constraints characteristic of different labour markets, it slides into an account in which choices underwrite the acceptance of the concomitants within production of those labour market options — so that such workers 'devalue' non-economic rewards and are 'prepared to experience their work as labour'. These two consequences are the complementary aspects of a marginalist market model of class situations, and they come to dominate the analysis despite the authors' 'radical' concern with constraints and deprivations. On the other hand it is only at the level of a simplified categorisation of market situations that the notion of 'labour power' can serve to buttress the differentiation Goldthorpe et al. regard as crucial; for clerical workers, craftsmen and assembly-line workers all 'place their labour power at the disposal of an employer' so that employers exercise command over the disposition of their labour and they are placed in an antagonistic relation with those employers. The differentiation of the experience of these categories of workers within both the labour market and the labour process, and the convergence of their positions, must then be traced in the pattern of development of relations between labour and capital. That there is some differentiation among such sellers of labour power is not in dispute, though this may be denied by vulgar marxism, but such differentiation does not occur uniquely at the borderline between manual and non-manual workers nor can it be analysed as a property of market situations

abstracted from the broader dynamic of capital-labour relations. The Luton study operates with just such an abstraction, having stipulated features of the broader economic conditions, and of corporate strategy, as 'givens' within which particular labour market niches can be explored. This means firstly that differences in the situations of different categories of workers are treated simply as differences of market capacity, while secondly the preoccupation with the manual/non manual divide encourages a simplified depiction of the contrasting market situations of workers on each side of that divide.

In summary, this crucial phase of the empirical investigation of class formation by the Luton study succeeds in challenging the embourgeoisement thesis almost by definition, by characterising in a fuller fashion the market situation of some affluent manual workers. However, it offers a very inadequate basis for any more positive class analysis, firstly because it accomplishes a market-based account which directs attention away from transformation and conflict within production. Secondly, it side-steps the neo-weberian dilemma of demarcation of class situations by deploying the ideal-type contrasts already noted and glossing over the complexities of the differentiations in both labour market and labour process evident even within their own sample. These features of the analysis of the market situation in the Affluent Worker have implications both for the role that status discriminations and normative orientations are then given in the rest of the analysis, and for the problems which arise in the course of this analysis. These implications I will seek to trace out in the following section of this chapter. This will involve both a discussion of the conceptual framework for the analysis of the normative aspects of class formation, as it was developed in the programmatic 1963 article, and a consideration of the empirical report in the final monograph.

The normative and relational aspects of class

Goldthorpe and Lockwood confront two types of argument and evidence under the heading of the normative aspect of class formation, both of which had been combined with information about income levels and treated as demonstrating the existence of 'middle class attitudes and values' among affluent manual workers. One strand of interpretation severely criticised by Goldthorpe and Lockwood is that drawing substantial conclusions about class perspectives from responses to opinion poll questions which involved middle-class self-identifications.

Basing themselves on the work of Popitz, Willener, Dahrendorf and Bott they emphasised that such questions and responses have an indeterminate meaning unless located within the general framework of 'social imagery' held by respondents. Any systematic comparisons of the outlooks of different categories of employees must consider such general frameworks of "basic social imagery" explored by open-ended questioning since "arbitrary variation and ambiguity" of meaning make specific responses to forced-choice questions valueless as evidence.[28]

This argument is not merely a methodological critique, and one well made in relation to the extrapolations made by certain commentators on embourgeoisement, but is clearly underpinned by the positive programme of class analysis arising from the literature on social imagery and sketched out in Lockwood's "The 'New Working Class'." This makes the central task of class analysis the elucidation of the character of distinctive, somewhat coherent, patterns of social imagery and their relationship to specific "class and status positions", though the correspondences involved are qualified by a recognition that incoherences may arise in the outlooks of particular individuals and, more crucially, especially among those groups who occupy an ambiguous class position.[29] This concern with correspondences between social imagery and class location is itself grounded in the emphasis, noted earlier, on the parochial genesis of social perspectives in personal encounters with immediate social reality. However, what is unclear from this discussion, given the recognition of incoherences, is how the analyst is to distinguish an incoherent image marking the margins of class locations, but assimilable to the modal type, from an additional distinctive image matching some additional or intermediate class situation. In the Goldthorpe and Lockwood analysis this problem arises both in the context of the initial outline of the contrasting working class and middle class perspectives and in the later discussion of the convergence of the social perspectives of affluent manual workers and routinised clerical workers.[30] As with the analysis of market class situations these problems of demarcation can be glossed over in the characterisation of ideal-types, this time of social imagery, but only at the expense of a concern with the ambiguities, dynamics and contradictions which may characterise social imagery.

Analogous problems of demarcation beset the argument which Goldthorpe and Lockwood developed to criticise the second strand of

evidence adduced by embourgeoisement theorists to demonstrate the middle class 'psychology' of affluent manual workers. This second line of evidence concerns the apparent discovery among manual workers of particular themes of conduct -- homecentredness, moneymindedness, future orientation, and status consciousness -- which were considered to be distinctively middle class. The critique of this diagnosis by Goldthorpe et al involves a number of specific points about forms of conduct which apparently remain the preserve of the middle class -- mutual home entertainment is the favourite in both the article and the monograph -- and other forms of conduct which have long characterised working class communities and thus cannot mark any major departure in life-style -- the favourite here is status distinctions, focussing on the distinction between 'rough' and 'respectable'. However, the argument cannot operate simply at this level of counting the apparent continuities and discontinuities in particular bits of behaviour. Rather, it is grounded in an argument that discerns continuities underlying change, so that what is involved is seen "as a far reaching adaptation and development of the traditional working class way of life under greatly altered economic and physical conditions."[31] This argument involves a contrast between the <u>phenotypical</u> analysis of life styles, which simply treats specific facets of conduct as essentially working class or middle class, and their own <u>genotypical</u> analysis which regards specific forms of conduct as the joint product of broader orientations and economic and physical exigencies:

> "this will entail going beyond the mere surface description of 'home-centredness', money-mindedness, 'status-striving' and so on, and seeking some understanding of how the behavioural patterns in question are related to, and take meaning from, the life histories and life-situations of the individuals and groups concerned."[32]

On this basis they suggest that those facets of life-style most discussed by embourgeoisement theorists are precisely those which have been most radically adapted to changing circumstances, such as geographical mobility and relative isolation from kin, while commentators on affluence have neglected both those patterns of conduct which, free from novel exigencies, remain similar to those of other working class groups, and the manner in which novel exigencies themselves account for changes in conduct without reference to changes in class affiliation.

This critique of the empiricism of the embourgeoisement approach exposes real weaknesses in that approach, but at the same time the alternative formulation offered by Goldthorpe and Lockwood is not

without its ambiguities. They spend remarkably little time exploring the character of their argument about norms and exigencies, and some of the ramifications of the phenotypical/genotypical distinction are only confronted in a subsidiary article concerned primarily with family relations and written by one of the junior researchers on the project, Jennifer Platt.[33] She brings out the key assumption of the argument which is that in "stable, traditionalistic settings" there will be a match between norms and conduct because a relation of correspondence between norms and conditions will have been established. However, in conditions of "unusual individual mobility or general change" established norms will still inform conduct but conditions will frustrate the straightforward living out of those norms.[34] Instead these new conditions act as exigencies which will refract conduct in novel directions even while established norms are adhered to. However "in the long run it may be functionally necessary for the two to come into line, and it is plausible to suggest that many norms are post hoc rationalisations rather than independant causes" so a new correspondence between situations and norms will emerge. "In the short run, the way in which a given discrepancy will be resolved remains problematic. It is common for normative inconsistencies to exist, and people have various mechanisms for dealing with them."[35] These comments relate specifically to a discussion of patterns of conjugal role-relationships but they indicate the character of the difficulties of the phenotypical/genotypical distinction as it is more generally applied by Goldthorpe and Lockwood.

These ambiguities arise first of all from the manner in which conduct can be variously interpreted as arising from different combinations of putative norms and exigencies. When should an analyst see the conditions surrounding an activity merely as exigencies which refract established norms into new patterns of conduct, and when should they be seen as the primary experiences underpinning new norms and activities? Or less abstractly, when should Goldthorpe and Lockwood write of the "development of the traditional working class way of life" or "the adaptation of old norms to new exigencies and opportunities" and when should they acknowledge new norms and traditions in the making which in their words "are related to, and take meaning from, the life histories and life situations of the individuals and groups concerned"?[36] Their formulation appears to leave considerable scope to the analyst's preference, to exercise ingenuity in tracing cultural continuities or

in marking new departures and emphases. The backcloth to this analytical ambiguity remains the diversity of market situations which may be taken as points of reference in the cross-matching of cultures and situations and in the demarcation in non-market terms of crucial class boundaries. However in Goldthorpe et al. much of this ambiguity is suppressed by an implicit appeal to the rhetorical conception of a uniform labour market for manual labour which was noted earlier. In this context there is a tendency in the Luton studies to treat the affluent instrumental worker as the exemplar of the character of that labour market while the 'traditional' worker serves as the exemplar of working class sociability. Thus informal interaction in "public and present-oriented conviviality" is seen as the norm from which affluent workers diverge because of exigencies arising from their market situation, such as geographical mobility and shiftwork.[37] This brings out a second source of ambiguity in the Goldthorpe and Lockwood approach. This relates to the implied stable correspondence of norms and conditions in the settings which provide the yardsticks, against which the refraction of conduct by exigency among affluent manual workers is analysed. Once the assumption of stability is relaxed then it becomes evident that so-called traditional social settings will also be characterised by a complex interplay between varied norms and exigencies in which "normative inconsistencies" and "post hoc rationalisations" will play a part, rather than by a tight correspondence between a cluster of immediate circumstances and related norms and imagery. Thus such norms and imagery cannot be given a privileged status, as they are in the sociological ideal-type of traditionalism (an ideal-type which incidentally tends to be defined in residual terms against a conception of individual calculative action in a parallel fashion to Weber's conception of traditional action), but must be related to specific historical patterns of social change. Thus these problems in the designation of those continuities and discontinuities in working class culture which might serve, within the neo-weberian framework, to demarcate class boundaries, underpin the issues raised by those commentators who attacked the a-historical and overdrawn character of the notion of the 'traditional working class' following its codification in Lockwood's "Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society".[38]

It is also appropriate in the context of this discussion of cultural continuities and exigencies, to note two other features of the Affluent Worker study which undermine the approach which Goldthorpe and Lockwood

adopt in their discussion of norms and conduct. The first concerns the demographic characteristics of the chosen sample, and in particular their age and marital status. By focussing on married men between the ages of 21 and 46 they focus on a category of people who might be expected to be more constrained in their participation in both formal and informal community activities than those falling outside the sample; and this may skew their understanding of strands of working class culture in the workplace and the community. The second point concerns their tendency to equate the absence of "traditionalism on the part of workers, managements and employers alike" in the context of only recent industrial development and expansion with the absence of <u>any</u> wider cultural and institutional framework within which individual adaptations occur; leaving something of a vacuum within which individuals may either translate traditional norms in new contexts or possibly adopt middle-class values.[39] However "an absence of long-standing traditions of industrial working-class life -- as for example, ones centering on trade unionism, Labour politics or Nonconformist religion" does not mean the <u>absence</u> of some wider institutional framework within which personal transformations of outlook occur, even though that framework may owe more to contemporary <u>national</u> political and trade-union developments than in long established industrial areas.[40] As the authors themselves acknowledge the designation of Luton as a 'turnip patch' by left-wing activists did not connote the simple absence of a labour tradition but the the presence of a non-militant one at the institutional level of trade union officialdom:

> "institutional differences [between the collective bargaining arrangements of the different firms] were probably of far less consequence for industrial relations in the three firms than was the character of local union leadership. The officials chiefly concerned included few militants, at least of the class-conscious type, and prevailing attitudes tended to be those rather of 'business' unionism."[41]

As Goldthorpe and Lockwood emphasise "such attitudes were largely consistent with those displayed by the members of the rank-and-file whom we interviewed", but it would appear just as unwarranted to assume that such officials simply reflected rank-and-file opinion as to assume that they simply created it. As will be seen later Goldthorpe and Lockwood emphasise the scope of the Labour leadership on a national level to organise class consciousness in the future, though they are

much less clear about the role of such leadership in the past.[42]

Having considered the logic and the difficulties associated with the conceptual discussion of the relational and normative aspect of class formation presented by Goldthorpe and Lockwood, it is now necessary to consider the manner in which these arguments are pursued in the empirical study, beginning with a brief review of the analysis of sociability. It will be evident from the discussion so far that the notion of the 'relational' aspect of class has a somewhat elastic meaning in the Affluent Worker literature. One usage involves an 'expansive' conception of all the social relations which condition both norms and perspectives and responses to mere economic trends. Here social interaction in the workplace assumes a central role but always (as has been seen) in terms of immediate interpersonal relations rather than more anonymous relations between labour and capital. However there is also a narrower focus on patterns of sociability which are seen as of prime significance in denoting exclusion and inclusion between particular class cultures. In the monograph Goldthorpe and his colleagues analyse work in terms of market situations and thus it is the latter conception of the relational which comes to predominate.

Three themes are developed in the discussion of 'the' patterns of sociability'. Firstly, there is the similarity of the 'privatised' home-centred social life of manual and white-collar workers. Secondly there exist some differences in the dominant patterns of sociability between these two groups. Finally the authors note the predominance of social contacts within each grouping rather than between manual and white-collar workers. On the first point Goldthorpe et al comment that:

> "there is here, then, some possible support for the idea that we previously advanced of a process of 'normative convergence' between affluent manual and lower-level white-collar groups -- one focal point of this being an overriding concern with the economic fortunes and social relationships of the conjugal unit. Although, as we have described, the worlds of work of the men in our two samples show notable contrasts, and although with the manual workers at least work exerts a clearly restrictive influence upon the pattern of non-working life, it would seem that the majority of our manual and white-collar couples do have in common a propensity to devote their spare time overwhelmingly to home and family and to limit their wider social contacts even to the point

at which the family is in a state of near isolation."[43]
They are equivocal about the interplay of norms and exigencies underlying this pattern, both presuming that novel exigencies had refracted conduct into new forms and recognising "some degree of similarity in underlying social norms".[44] Thus Goldthorpe and his colleagues read their cross-sectional data in terms of a convergence where there is a "degree of normative continuity under much changed external conditions",but at the same time admit that cultural continuities are insufficient in this instance to justify in themselves the mapping of a class boundary.[45] On this basis they acknowledge:

> "a further possibility arises of which we must take note: namely, that on the basis of some measure of normative convergence between more 'advanced' manual and lower-level white-collar groups, a process of genuine social fusion may be occurring across the marked status division that had hitherto been generally found between manual and non-manual strata", and they suggest that "this possibility can best be investigated through considering the extent to which, in the course of their leisure and other non-work activities, our respondents came into regular contact with persons of white-collar status".[46]

Before considering their findings in that regard, however, it is necessary to examine the second of their themes outlined above: that of <u>differences</u> in patterns of sociability between the two samples.

Goldthorpe et al document a number of respects in which distinctive styles of sociability may exist between the two samples: manual workers more often complement kin friendships with neighbours; they have a more segregated social network; and they less often participate in formal associations; as well as indulging less often in home entertainment, especially of non-kin. However such indications of differences in average patterns of conduct must surely be viewed with some caution as evidences of fundamental class cleavages, and even as demonstrations of cultural continuity with some 'traditional' working class. In particular it should be noted that the averages summarise considerable ranges and hence overlaps of conduct. Thus, while sixty per cent of manual workers do not participate in any formal association this is also true of forty per cent of white-collar workers.[47] Similarly it is possible to note that manual workers "unlike the white-collar workers, still sometimes find it possible to have a number of 'mates' recruited

from the locality, as well as from work, with whom they typically associate independantly of their wives"; but in reality neighbourhood 'mates' account for only five per cent of the total contacts of husbands and wives, there is no real statistical evidence of differences between manual and clerical workers in terms of 'workmates', and "47% of our affluent workers did not mention any friend whom they did not share with their wives".[48] Goldthorpe et al. deploy two arguments to rescue the significance of these differences in average patterns of sociability despite such overlap, but neither of them serve to sustain an argument about class closure. One argument points out that patterns of sociability appeared marked by the constraints arising from overtime working and shiftwork, that is by some of the constraints incurred as the price of affluence among manual workers. This is a significant indication of the impact of the market situation of such workers upon their leisure time, but as has already been seen it does not provide a clear basis for differentiating manual and clerical workers because craftsmen are less vulnerable to at least some of these constraints.[49] It serves as a partial indication of occupational rather than class divisions. The other argument focusses on the correlation between 'conjugal white-collar affiliations' and variations in patterns of sociability and concluded that:

> "those of our affluent workers and their wives with the most extensive white-collar connections are, with some regularity the most comparable with our white-collar couples .... the implication we would draw from this is, therefore, the following: that in so far as some degree of subcultural similarity is in evidence between our samples, this results less from their economic homogeneity than from the existence within the manual sample of couples in which at least one spouse has experience of white-collar milieux from family or occupational life."[50]

However, from the point of view of any positive analysis of class relations this argument seems quite perverse. It seeks to insist on the continuity of working class experience by discounting those workers contaminated by clerical contact. However this glosses over the extent to which variations in the white-collar pattern could probably be discounted to some extent in a similar manner (after all fortysix per cent of the white-collar couples had some manual worker parents) while the really significant point is the extent of overlap and interlinkage of experience which underpins a range of quite minor variations in sociability.[51]

A similar question can be posed in relation to the final theme of the Cambridge analysis of sociability; that of interaction and closure. Here the evidence is that manual workers predominate among the spare time companions of manual workers while white-collar workers predominate, though less clearly, among the leisure companions of the clerical workers; and that kin account for a disproportionate number of the cross-category contacts. On this basis the authors' conclude that:

"we have evidence which goes strongly against the idea either of embourgeoisement through assimilation or of the emergence of a new social stratum which effectively obliterates the manual-nonmanual division.... whatever the degree to which the couples in our critical case have come closer to certain white-collar groups in the normative basis of their social lives, they are still largely set apart from white-collar persons in terms of actual relationships" and they add that "where no family or occupational 'bridges' to white-collar society existed -- or at least none of the kind we recorded -- it could be said that sustained 'social' ties with white-collar persons were almost entirely lacking among the couples we studied."[52]

All these points certainly represent so many additional nails in the coffin of the embourgeoisement thesis as elaborated by Goldthorpe and Lockwood for the purpose of critique, but it is much less clear how far they sustain the more positive claims which at this point the authors push quite hard. If it is recognised that kin provide a major source of spare time companions anyway for both manual and clerical workers, so that they cannot simply be discounted, while a crucial feature of both these categories of workers when considered in terms of their "life histories and life situations" is an appreciable overlap of experiences, so that family and occupational 'bridges' in both directions cannot be regarded as aberrant, then appreciable interaction and overlap coincide with the apparent normative convergence. After all forty per cent of the clerks' spare time companions are manual workers and twentyfive per cent of manual workers' friends are non-manual.[53]

What this suggests is that as an exercise in the development of a sophisticated analysis of class formation the discussion of social relations is quite inconclusive. An analysis of differentiation and closure in the sphere of sociability cannot repair the limitations of the analysis of class situation which glossed over a complex variety of market niches by deploying overdrawn ideal-type contrasts. As has

been seen Goldthorpe et al adopt a number of interpretative strategies -- discounting the conduct of manual workers contaminated by white-collar affiliations, implying that averages indicate norms, and stressing the cultural continuities behind exigent conduct despite the ambiguities of such argument --which reinforce the emphasis on continuing cleavage between manual and clerical workers despite the recognised normative convergence. However, each of these procedures can be contested to emphasise instead overlap and interplay, while even within the authors' approach what is lacking is any comparative yardstick against which to measure the closeness or separation of their manual and clerical workers. How would their data compare with an examination of the social relations and sociability of craftsmen and semi-skilled workers, or of clerks and professionals? In this regard it is worth noting some of MacKenzie's findings in a study which focussed more on craftsmen but within a very similar analytical framework. His investigation of the relational aspect of class formation documents separation between craft and clerical workers in interactional terms, so that he can claim as his "most important finding" the fact "that while blue and white collar workers alike may <u>see</u> each other as social equals, in <u>relational</u> terms they remain isolated .... it is not sociologically meaningful to regard these people as members of the same social class."[54] However at the same time his data also show that clerks and managers also exhibit relational isolation, while "skilled workers would not appear to choose friends randomly from within the traditional working class, i.e. from the total population of blue collar workers. Instead, by a margin of considerably more than two to one leisure time companions are selected only from within the ranks of the skilled" and "to the extent that craftsmen do chose non-craft friends however, the likelihood would seem to be that they spend time with white-collar rather than non-skilled blue collar companions".[55] While MacKenzie's study was of an American community and a variagated collection of craftsmen it does suggest that wider attention to a broader spectrum of manual and white-collar workers would place the separations and overlaps documented by Goldthorpe et al within a whole series related to particular occupational connections and to wider, but shifting and interlocking, variations in market situations (or in MacKenzie's terminology locations in the division of labour).[56] On this basis it is not at all clear that the <u>Affluent Worker</u> team can confidently repudiate <u>within their own analytical framework</u> the view of convergence which the senior authors adopted in an early popular exposition of their critique of embourgeoisement; namely that

> "what we may be witnessing is not a working class increasingly adapting its attitudes to those of a relatively static and homogeneous middle class, but rather the formation of a large new potential social stratum which is neither middle class nor working class."[57]

As the authors' themselves acknowledge their interactional data is made the critical basis for the repudiation of such a view within the weberian analysis of group formation, and it has been shown that it cannot meet the analytical demands placed upon it. What we are left with are some genuine indications of some subtle variations in the average patterns of sociability of manual and clerical workers and some strong evidence of the impact of overtime and shiftwork upon leisure time -- which differentiates among manual workers as well as between them and clerks -- but neither is adequately theorised in relation to fundamental class relations, and neither serves as an adequate basis for class-boundary demarcation even in weberian terms. How then do such subtle and minor variations in patterns of sociability come to be invested with critical analytical importance and to be overinterpreted as evidences of basic class boundaries? I wish to suggest that these features are a consequence of the limitations and ambiguities in the neo-weberian analysis of class situations which served as the starting point of Goldthorpe and Lockwood's project. As has been seen, their discussion of the economic aspect of class formation both focussed on variations in market situations and imposed a simplifying dichotomisation of manual and white-collar markets on such variations. This was the point of departure for the search for critical exclusion processes in patterns of sociability, and the mapping of variations into a model of contrasting modes of such sociability. Thus there is much to agree with in the following assessment of these aspects of the affluent worker study:

> "what is being studied in the affluent worker project is whether increasing affluence among manual workers is affecting their relationships with non-manual workers. Thus affluence is no longer an index of societal change, but is one factor to be taken into account in considering the relations between occupational groups without reference to any theory of class, Marxian or otherwise."[58]

Certainly the study becomes one simply of relations between different occupational levels, but I have argued that this is the <u>consequence</u> of a particular neo-weberian conception of class analysis rather than arising from mere empiricism and the absence of <u>any</u> theory of class, though from the standpoint of a marxian concern with production

relations the consequences are rather similar.

This examination of the logic of the analysis of the economic and relational aspects of class, as it is defined programmatically and developed empirically in the Affluent Worker studies, provides an essential context for a consideration of the normative aspect of class formation. This part of the analysis has been the one which has received the bulk of the critical attention given to the Affluent Worker study: comments on the economic 'aspect' have themselves focussed on attitudes and orientations as such rather than the underlying claims about market situations and their concomitants, while the relational analysis has been virtually ignored despite the significance which Goldthorpe et al attach to it.[59] Of course the focus of discussion on orientations to work rather than class situations was a feature of the Affluent Worker research itself, as à result of both a preoccupation with attitudinal data and an emerging emphasis on choice within the labour market, but as has been seen in the earlier discussion such orientations were both interpreted in terms of a model of manual and clerical labour markets and deployed as evidence concerning the character of those markets. Thus it would be wrong to suggest, as both MacKenzie and Cousins do, that the development of the Affluent Worker analysis simply moves from a structural analysis of class situations to an orientations analysis of values and projects.[60] For what was involved was the increasingly stark delineation of the core feature of the neo-weberian class analysis through a characterisation of differing labour market situations and their concomitants. These afforded the reference points for the interpretation of orientations just as those orientations were taken as evidence for the character of the distinct labour markets. It is on this basis that class situations figure as the points of reference for the discussion of relational and normative class formation, a point which MacKenzie concedes when he notes that "this is not to say that market and work situation are never used to explain certain behavioural and value patterns of affluent workers [but such explanation]... is sporadic and piecemeal ... where it does occur it appears often .... in somewhat simple and elementary terms."[61] But the underlying conception of distinctive market situations remains fundamental, both as the point of departure for the analysis and in underpinning the characterisation of class division in relational and normative terms — this being Goldthorpe and Lockwood's solution to the class boundary problem. This will be the theme that I will

pursue in my discussion of their treatment of 'aspirations and social perspectives', and it is in that context that I will consider the main criticisms which have been mounted against this part of their work.

Aspirations and Social Perspectives

Against this background of concern with the basic labour market situations from which the analysis of relations and norms develops, the most striking feature of the discussion of social imagery concerns the manner in which the ideal-types of such imagery correspond to the analyses of market situations. Goldthorpe and his colleagues themselves recognise that the contrasting white-collar and manual perspectives presented at the beginning of the chapter on imagery abstract from both the complexities of Lockwood's typology of types of traditional imagery and such complicating 'types' as the 'respectable artisan' or the lower-middle-class 'ritualist'; while others have pointed out that the initial version of the ideal-types presented in the 1963 paper already explicitly excluded the possibility of commitment to the labour movement as an agency of social transformation.[62] What remain after this process of simplification are two axes of contrast between types of social imagery which correspond directly with contrasting forms of market structure and market action. The first axis concerns the contrast between vertical and horizontal labour market movement, between a career structure and a steady job. The second concerns the extent of individual rational calculation or traditionalism of action within the labour market; what would appear to be a quite direct application of the weberian contrast between rational and traditional action.[63] These axes structure the selective synthesis of the empirical studies of social imagery represented by the ideal-type contrasts: orientation towards individual movement on the basis of individual achievement through a dependable status hierarchy; and orientation towards managing to survive in a subordinate situation partially on the basis of a defensive collectivism. At the same time the abstraction of career and status progression glosses over constraints and blockages, and quite mundane and limited job ladders, experienced by many clerical workers. Similarly the abstraction of working class traditionalism glosses over the forms of calculative action, both individual and collective, which will necessarily be involved in manual workers' responses to the differentiation and flux characteristic of the ostensibly homogeneous labouring market. The first deficiency is not repaired within the Affluent Worker study, where, despite recognition that at least a third of the clerical workers studied were sceptical

about their promotion chances, it is implied that only among manual workers might promotion be seen not "as a means of 'getting on' in career terms so much as a way of escaping from the dilemma of having to forfeit immediate satisfactions from work in order to obtain a level of earnings appropriate to their out-plant objectives".[64] To appropriate Lockwood's formula, perhaps promotion is promotion is promotion and not necessarily 'getting on' in career and status terms! The second deficiency is repaired within the Affluent Worker study — by the discovery of the instrumentalism of the affluent worker — but in such a way that a contrast between rational calculation and traditionalism within a superficially defined horizontal labour market displaces any scope for the examination of the complex forms of consciousness and action which interplay with the vicissitudes of both labour market and labour process moments of the relation between labour and capital.

Turning then to the use which the Cambridge team make of these ideal types, there are two phases to their account. The first continues the theme of the distinctiveness of manual and clerical workers norms and conduct, and the second focusses specifically on the novel features of the outlook of the affluent manual worker in comparison with the traditional worker stereotype. The contrast between clerical and manual workers focusses first upon the differences in financial and family planning related to "differences which still widely persist [...] between the conditions of service and occupational opportunities of manual and white-collar employees: most notably, from the fact that the latter are far more likely to have genuine career chances or at any rate to be able to look forward to steadily rising incomes from salary increments quite apart from any general wage and salary movements.[65] Here, as with some of the relational data, important differences in average conduct are plausibly related to these distinctive occupational situations, though again there is also appreciable overlap. Secondly Goldthorpe et al consider the aspirations for, and achievements of, manual and clerical workers children, both at school and work. Again there were differences in the average levels of both aspiration and achievement between manual and white-collar families. Goldthorpe et al emphasise that "the aspirations that our affluent workers and their wives held for their children were at only a slightly lower level than those of the white-collar sample" (and craftsmen would seem to be more ambitious than clerks) but focus on the fact that "the discrepancy between parental aspirations and children's performance is often quite

striking."[66] However, as the authors themselves admit this discrepancy is not peculiar to the manual workers and their families, being only slightly less marked for the clerks and their families. Thus the majority of white-collar workers' children still attended non-selective schools while over a third of manual workers' children obtained white-collar jobs.[67] Once more, then, the differentiation between manual and clerical workers can easily be exaggerated, and this additional evidence does nothing to alter the evaluation of that differentiation offered earlier, when the relational aspect of class was examined; namely that Goldthorpe et al have documented a real but incomplete occupational differentiation rather than a fundamental class division. A final point, which was just touched on above but which reinforces this assessment, is that the interpretation of the outlooks of clerical workers in the Affluent Worker study relies on an assimilation of their patterns of conduct to the stereotype of status advance without any direct evidence against an interpretation in the more mundane terms allowed for manual workers.[68]

So far as the affluent manual workers were concerned such more direct evidence about the general frames of reference they employed was, of course, collected, and formed the basis of the final, celebrated section of the Affluent Worker analysis: that concerned with social imagery and particularly with the 'discovery' of the money model of society. Following the strategy of an extended and relatively unstructured interview the Luton researchers found little evidence of the dichotomous us-and-them imagery associated with the traditional worker stereotype, but at the same time the affluent workers' views rarely corresponded with that of a highly differentiated status hierarchy. Instead their views of the shape of the class structure could usually be summarised in terms of one substantial class grouping with one or more superior groups and sometimes an inferior group; while the major criterion of class location emphasised by these workers was "differences in the incomes, wealth and material living standards of individuals and groups"; in a word money. Thus despite "a considerable amount of diversity" Goldthorpe identified the 'money' model of society as one held by over half of the manual workers in the Luton study.[69]

In line with the development of an analysis tracing the correspondence between patterns of immediate social experience and consciousness Goldthorpe et al identify this money model as one arising

directly from the experience of the affluent workers, one marked in particular by economic advance through maximisation of economic advantages within waged work. This diagnosis of a close fit between immediate experience and consciousness then serves, as it did in Lockwood's Blackcoated Worker, to rebuff imputations of 'false consciousness'. This argument is developed in the following terms:

> "questions may well be raised concerning the objective 'correctness' of our affluent workers' understanding of their society: for example, questions of the extent to which they may be the victims of a 'false' consciousness ... certainly one argument could be reasonably advanced. This is that certain important features of our respondents' actual position in society -- ones of which they were not in fact aware -- were only rarely seen by them as aspects of social class, and tended thus not to be incorporated, or at least not centrally, into their conceptions of the class structure and of their place within it. One would cite, for instance, the fact that as manual workers they performed entirely subordinate roles within their employing organisations and, in society at large, tended to belong to the stratum of those who regularly received orders but who seldom gave them; or that, as representatives of wage labour they stood always in a relationship of at least potential conflict with their employers over economic and authority issues. Again, however, examination of the likely sources of our respondents' seemingly distorted view is worth while. The men who made up our sample, it must be remembered, had for the most part given high priority to raising their material standard of living and had moreover achieved substantial success in this respect; in consumption terms, the majority had certainly enjoyed, and were aware of having enjoyed, considerable upward mobility and often in the relatively recent past. Thus, it is not perhaps so remarkable after all that in the way these men envisaged the social order their own subordination should not be the feature of greatest salience, and that their image of the class structure should tend to be one that was most typically formed from the standpoint of the consumer and 'family man' rather than from that of the producer and the employee, In other words, before resorting to claims of 'false' consciousness, it is important to recall that the social experience of many of our respondents was of a kind that could reasonably lead them to be less impressed by the weakness and vulnerability of their class position than by the extent to which

> they have been able to achieve economic advance within the existing social order."[70]

I have quoted this argument at such length because it is crucial both in revealing the logic of the Affluent Worker analysis and in underpinning the politics of the study. In the latter respect it not only sets the scene for a critique of marxian analyses of affluence but also serves as the context for the more positive political perspectives essayed by Goldthorpe and his colleagues, and both these strands will be taken up in the final section of this chapter. However at this point I want to focus on the underlying logic of the argument and the manner in which it is vulnerable to challenge.

The first point I wish to make concerns the terms of the critique of false consciousness. Despite a footnote reference to Lockwood's earlier discussion, careful examination reveals that the explicit claims made in this passage are quite modest and even equivocal in comparison with those made in the Blackcoated Worker. Whereas Lockwood emphasised that white-collar consciousness closely corresponded to the specific class situation of the clerical worker, Goldthorpe et al stress that the particular emphasis which they discern in the affluent worker's consciousness is intelligible in terms of his class situation, even though it focusses on some elements of that situation at the expense of others. This seems to concede an important part of any sophisticated analysis of false consciousness, that concerned with the partial and distorted character of such consciousness, so that the force of the critique mounted by Goldthorpe et al is lost unless it is aimed at a crude account of the imposition of a totally alien set of ideas upon the working class, an account that is quite at odds with, for example, Marx's own discussion in Capital.[71] Thus the question of the correspondence between a 'commodity' consciousness and the location of the affluent worker within the labouring market remains open, and the characterisations of each side of that 'correspondence' cannot simply be validated in terms of the fit between them.

In this context the criticisms which have been made against the Goldthorpe interpretation of the social imagery of the Affluent Worker gain a wider significance for the whole analysis of class formation. These criticisms hinge around the extent to which issues of power and antagonism or status advancement may be accomodated within, or coexist with, the money idiom which Goldthorpe et al demonstrate to be the most

popular and explicit idiom in their interview discussions with their affluent worker sample. The critics have wanted to suggest that such an idiom may be more inclusive in its referents than the Goldthorpe diagnosis, of a pecuniary imagery finely attuned to labour market advance and a privatised life style, suggests. Thus one query directed at the Affluent Worker interpretation has been concerned with the possible conflation of distinctively money-based conceptions of groupings and divisions with status models couched in money terms. Hiller, for example, has emphasised that "we must distinguish between the everyday use of 'money' as an objective differentiating factor (with a minimum of prestige overtones) and as a basis upon which social status may be accorded", and he concluded that "the work of Goldthorpe et al (who argue most cogently for the recognition of the empirical evidence of such a view) is unclear on these points."[72] To some extent this seems an unfair assessment since the Cambridge team did address this issue when they argued that:

> "it is important to note that in some cases, and quite often where 'money' models were advanced, respondents did not so much neglect the prestige and status aspects of social stratification as deny their validity -- pointing in particular to what they saw as the hollowness and absurdity of lower middle-class 'pretensions' and 'snobbism'; that is to say, the images of society they adhered to had a critical function."[73]

On the other hand, however, this critical function was little explored by the authors; and at one point where they did pursue the issue, in connection with attitudes to canteen arrangements, they noted not only a strand of radical egalitarian critique but also a denial of the saliency of status divisions in the workplace among workers who saw factory work as "simply a means of securing a relatively high income with which to try to maintain their status position in their out-of-work lives."[74] In addition some additional data reported by Platt suggests that many of the Luton workers operated on some occassions with a fairly conventional status hierarchy so that "most of the answers seemed to picture society in status rather than class terms, or at least to regard the status picture as the orthodox one to which they had normative (egalitarian) or practical objections."[75] Such comments suggest that the interplay between different idioms and conceptions of social structure among the affluent manual workers was more complex than the ideal-type money-model implies, and this tends to undermine not only any validation of the analysis of the economic aspect of class in terms of

a correspondence between the economic and the normative, but also the continuing contrast between clerical and manual workers' imagery, a point I shall return to below.

While such arguments weaken the logic of the Affluent Worker analysis of class imagery, other critiques have mounted a more substantial challenge by linking their criticisms of the notion of the money model to an alternative conception of the class location of affluent workers. Thus they have addressed the central theme of the Goldthorpe and Lockwood investigation of class formation, the manner in which relational and normative aspects both grow out of and consolidate the economic aspects of class, by challenging their characterisation of the class location of the affluent worker and their diagnosis of the pecuniary imagery of such workers, and thus the relationship between them portrayed in the argument about false consciousness quoted above. The main elements of such a critique were clearly delineated in Westergaard's discussion of 'the rediscovery of the cash nexus' which not only located the portrayal of working class consciousness in relation to an alternative analysis of both class location and labour movement institutions, but also pointed up most of the internal evidence within the Luton study supportive of his rival interpretation of class imagery.[76] Thus, despite the fact that his essay was largely completed before the publication of the final Affluent Worker monograph, other critiques of the analysis of the money model have tended largely to reiterate the points developed by Westergaard.[77]

The core of Westergaard's argument about working class consciousness concerns the rival strands which may be contained within an ambiguous or contradictory consciousness: "the ambivalent character of class consciousness among British workers, its continuing mixture of acquiescence and dissent."[78] Thus in response to the characterisation of the 'commodity' consciousness of the affluent worker contained in the final monograph of the Luton study Westergaard comments:

> "the distinction [between a 'power model' and a 'money model'] -- though it has significance -- seems both exaggerated and somewhat artificial. Differences of income and wealth, even if referred to only as differences in consumption capacity, imply differences of interest. Differences of interest in turn, when they are embedded in inequalities, imply differences of power. Indeed, the Luton evidence itself and other data show that ideas with connotations

of power, and inequalities of power, are certainly part of the contemporary working class 'counter-ideology', whether or not workers refer to these directly when asked to talk about 'class' as such. Such connotations surely are present, for example, in the view that the product of industry is divided inequitably; that politics is a matter of class interests; that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor; that big business -- and for that matter the official trade unions -- have too much 'power'."[79]

This argument mirrors that of Hiller on status in arguing that the meaning of the money idiom may be quite elastic, but then goes beyond that point to suggest that such elasticity together with fugitive indications of a concern with power imply more awareness of the experience of subordination and conflict than Goldthorpe et al are prepared to acknowledge in their characterisation of the fit between the commodity consciousness of the affluent worker and "the characteristic patterns that the interaction of choice and constraint [presumably in the labour market? A.E.] has imposed on their social lives."[80] What Westergaard argues is that the nature of the employment relations experienced by these affluent workers, together with their awareness of broader inequalities of condition, opportunity and power, does have an echo even in the results reported by Goldthorpe et al, while it is appropriate to suppose that these elements of 'counter-ideology' are both widespread and have potential significance for political mobilisation. Underpinning these arguments, of course, is a quite different interpretation of those employment relations to that offered by Goldthorpe, Lockwood, Bechofer and Platt: rather than a focus on the labouring market as a site of stable trade-offs between cash and deprivations, as a market situation with concomitant working conditions, Westergaard emphasises the cash nexus as a focus of instability and conflict arising both from instability of earnings and job security and from issues of control and authority inherent in that cash nexus.[81] While the ramifications of this analysis of the cash nexus are not fully elaborated by Westergaard, so that it is possible to argue as I shall in a later chapter that his discussion remains focussed too much on the labour market, nevertheless this point of reference allows him to challenge the narrow interpretation of the money model offerred by the Luton researchers and their associated polemic against any notion of false consciousness.

Other commentators, such as Beynon and Nichols, and Moorhouse, have very much followed and developed the themes of Westergaard's critique. Thus Beynon and Nichols, in an unpublished paper which prefigures some of the analyses in their later empirical case studies, build on his account of the cash nexus and also his queries about the characterisation of the consciousness of the affluent worker.[82] On the former they note that the cash nexus represents the point of departure for the relations within production between capital and labour, mediated by the initiatives of management; and that such relations necessarily involve processes of control and subordination. Thus "the rules of work and the control issues pertaining to them require analysis in their own right" while "instrumentality, even if fostered at home and reinforced in the community (and this is not inevitably the case) may not, when taken into work, remain impervious to the experiences encountered there."[83] On the characterisation of consciousness they not only reiterate Westergaard's comments on the elasticity of the idiom of money, and suggest that posing issues in terms of power might more directly elicit worker's views of subordination within and beyond production, but also raise questions about the 'texture' of class consciousness, both in terms of cross-cutting and interrelated features of specific workers ideas and actions and in the sense of different strands of opinion and outlook among the workforce. Thus they ask:

> "whether a minority of the workers interviewed at Luton gave consistently radical responses, or for that matter responded in a fascist, conservative or other way. Should such men have existed it is important to know how they fitted into the privatised world and what their lives were like. Alternatively, were the apparently disparate attitudes the study suggests to have existed not made up of the rather different groups of men it becomes necessary to think in terms of one working class consciousness which presents contradictory facets."[84]

Such an argument points away from a search for a fit between a consistent class-market situation and an average social imagery, towards an exploration of the interplay between the dynamics and contradictions of class relations and the dynamics and contradictions of class organisation and consciousness; a concern which, as will be seen, is pursued in their case studies.

Moorhouse, too, draws heavily on Westergaard, when he argues that "instead of being an alternative to and, indeed, the antithesis of power,

it [money] is rather the way inequalities of power and status can be succinctly symbolized or expressed."[85] He underlines this argument with a particularly telling quote, since it is drawn from one of the classic studies of the so-called traditional worker, Coal is Our Life:

> "since they can no longer conceive of 'getting on' in the old Samuel Smiles sense they seize on the most conspicuous outward characteristic of the class difference, and this is spending power, the possession of wealth."[86]

Unfortunately Moorhouse does not pursue this point to the extent of considering the analysis which Dennis et al provide of the manner in which money expresses an understanding of class relations and conflict, but he does add one further theme to the critique of the Affluent Worker study; namely that an examination of the topology rather than the idiom of the social imagery of the affluent worker reveals substantial convergence with a dichotomous model. Thus:

> "despite the repeated claim that 'privatised' workers will put themselves into a large central class, around three-quarters of those with such a model in fact appear to have a dichotomized image of society in which: (i) they put themselves into a large but essentially sub-ordinate group; (ii) the super-ordinate group is described as being formed by 'millionaires', 'high society', 'the very rich' and 'the well-to-do'."[87]

Moorhouse recognises both the complexities and the shifts of imagery which may occur, but on the basis of his own work he suggests "stability applied much more to basic patterns and relationships than to the terminology through which they were expressed"; while class political mobilisation may involve an uneven and dynamic relation between more and less sophisticated and articulate forms of consciousness among, for example, "a radical leadership, a small proportion of class conscious workers, and a relatively large proportion of discontented and alienated workers."[88] Once more, then, Moorhouse both challenges the narrow interpretation of the money idiom championed by Goldthorpe et al and suggests less concern with average patterns and more with the interplay and dynamics of different strands and even traditions of imagery and consciousness. At the same time, like Westergaard and Beynon and Nichols, he recognises, indeed emphasises, that there is no simple equation to be made between forms of immediate consciousness and social analyses of class relations and exploitation:

> "the frustrations and discontents inherent in day-to-day working class life consist of, at best, a practical understanding of class

> inequality: not details of the theory of surplus value but simply that they are exploited by the bosses."[89]

This invites neither a simple judgement of false consciousness nor a repudiation of those social analyses which are not transparently reflected in consciousness, the alternatives which Goldthorpe et al tend to pose. Instead it suggests an exploration of the mediations between fundamental social relations, immediate experience and forms of consciousness; for validation of the analysis of fundamental relations and appreciation of specific forms of consciousness depends upon tracing such mediations.

Underlying all these critiques, then, is a challenge not only to the specific interpretation of pecuniary consciousness presented by Goldthorpe et al, but also to the claimed correspondence between market situation and normative orientation. They argue that the pattern and dynamics of class consciousness must be more complex than is implied in the ideal types of immediate experience and social imagery presented by Goldthorpe and Lockwood, but also that an adequate understanding of that pattern and dynamic cannot simply relate to market situations, without an analysis of the dynamics of production relations within which the cash nexus forms a crucial moment.

The Cambridge Analysis of the Class Divide: an Interim Assessment

Setting the points I have just made in the context of the earlier discussion of the Goldthorpe and Lockwood project of class analysis, I wish to suggest that Goldthorpe et al sought to complete their analysis of class formation by tracing the correspondence between the economic and the normative, and by the completion of the economic in normative terms. Furthermore, they achieved this by a one-sided and narrow interpretation of the affluent workers' consciousness, which gained its plausibility as much from their characterisation of the market nexus it supposedly corresponded to, as from the inherent coherence of the data on imagery. Thus the logic of their analysis has remained impeccably weberian, developing from a weberian starting point pared down to its essentials in the characterisation of market situations, and then seeking to trace the process of class formation from that basis in normative and relational terms, As was seen earlier, such an analysis is beset by an inevitable tension between a view of class as market situation, which confronts problems of class demarcation, and one of class as social stratum; but the Affluent Worker analysis side-stepped this tension by adopting a crude characterisation of the contrast

between the market situations of manual and clerical workers which formed the basis for their interpretation of their relational and normative data. I have sought both to trace out this structuring of the analysis by the logic and dilemmas of neo-weberian class analysis, and also to underline the analytical deficiencies of this procedure, starting from the failure to explore the social relations of production and thus to locate variant market situations as aspects of the development of capital-labour relations, and ramifying into the overinterpretation of both relational and normative data.

This overinterpretation has involved both overdrawn contrasts between manual and clerical workers -- a feature discussed above primarily in the context of the analysis of patterns of sociability -- and an impoverished appreciation of the character and dynamics of the perspectives of the affluent workers themselves. To round off this discussion it should be noted that both of these limitations can be discerned in the Affluent Worker discussion of clerical workers' social imagery. In their programmatic article on 'affluence and the British class structure' Goldthorpe and Lockwood had combined their diagnosis of the privatised and instrumental affluent manual worker with a consideration of the shifts in outlook among clerical workers arising from bureaucratisation and inflation. Such an analysis drew upon Lockwood's earlier discussion of the Blackcoated Worker to provide an account of class formation on the other side of the manual/white-collar divide of a sort which was wholly absent from the arguments of the embourgeoisement theorists. On this basis Goldthorpe and Lockwood developed their argument about the independant convergence of affluent manual and routine clerical workers, but insisted in the following terms that "convergence should not be taken to imply identity":

> "it is reasonable to suppose that instrumental collectivism and family-centredness are present in both strata: but it is also reasonable to expect that the relative emphasis given to the two elements will differ from one stratum to the other. This is because for the 'new' working class convergence largely means an adaptation of ends, while for the 'new' middle class an adaptation of means. In the former case, convergence implies primarily an attenuation of collectivism of the solidaristic kind, of which an incipient family-centredness is a by-product. In the latter case, the by-product is instrumental collectivism, resulting from an attenuation of radical individualism. Thus both the new

'individualism' of the working class and the new 'collectivism' of the middle class, though bringing the two strata into closer approximation, are still likely to remain distinct, in more or less subtle ways, from the attenuated collectivism of the working class. This will perhaps be more true of the element of individualism; for it would seem most probable that the shift in aspirations among the 'new' working class will occur more gradually than the corresponding modification of means among the 'new' middle class."[90]

As might be expected within a neo-weberian framework it is at this point in the programmatic discussion, where Goldthorpe and Lockwood seek to defend this chosen line of class demarcation, that some of the weaknesses of their argument are exposed. In particular some of the difficulties associated with the 'phenotypical'/'genotypical' distinction which were touched on earlier beset this argument: thus it is unclear when the various processes of 'attenuation', 'adaptation' and 'incipient' development <u>would</u> be sufficiently developed to constitute a new fused intermediate grouping. On the other hand, if this process of independant convergence does not involve "the formation of a large new potential social stratum which is neither middle class nor working class", why should the subtle and tenuous line of class demarcation between clerical and manual workers be treated as <u>the</u> crucial class cleavage.[91] Yet in attacking the woolly argument that affluent manual workers had joined the middle class Goldthorpe et al come to deploy stereotyped characterisations of the market situation and the social perspectives of clerical versus manual workers which are tantamount to the defence of just such a claim that this is <u>the</u> crucial divide.

Turning to the empirical work it should first be noted that the extent of 'downward' mobility among the manual workers, together with the extent of manual worker origins among the clerical workers in the sample, itself undermines the conceptualisation in terms of 'attenuation' and convergence adopted in the paragraph quoted above: for it undermines the assumption of disparate starting points from which convergence proceeds. Thus an examination of the specific character of social imagery among these clerical workers, rather than deployment of the ideal type of middle-class imagery, would offer an important yardstick in the appraisal of the significance of the class boundary defended by Goldthorpe and Lockwood. However the examination of clerical workers social imagery in the <u>Affluent Worker</u> study is peculiarly cursory.

While the earlier discussion of economic and, especially, relational aspects of class formation had consistently focussed on comparisons between the affluent manual workers and clerical workers in the sample, such comparisons were relegated to the footnotes where social imagery was concerned. True, such footnotes claimed a marked contrast between the perspectives of the two categories of workers when viewed through the prism of the ideal types. However, when considered in the light of the earlier discussion of the latitude of interpretation within the 'money' model it is clear that such contrasts could only be drawn with care, while the evidence cited there and elsewhere in the project reports can also be adduced to emphasise the overlap between manual and clerical imagery. Thus such an alternative analysis might focus on the following features:

(i) though a smaller proportion of clerks than manual workers opted for 'money' as the most important determinant of class differences (thirty-five per cent as against fifty-six) it was still the most popular criterion amongst clerks;[92]

(ii) though there were more manual workers than clerks who opted for a two-class model (thirty-three per cent as against thirteen) the bulk of clerical workers (sixty-three per cent) still opted for a two or three class model rather than a more variegated one;[93]

(iii) according to Platt's analysis of occupational ranking a significant minority of clerks either down-graded the bank clerk (nineteen per cent) or disclaimed any ranking (seven per cent);[94]

(iv) while clerical workers were more ready to disapprove of trade union power and union links with the Labour Party they equalled manual workers in criticising big-business power (sixty per cent of manual workers compared with sixty-three per cent of clerical workers thought big business had too much power) and also tended to think that there was one law for the rich and another for the poor (seventy-two per cent of manual workers and fifty-nine per cent of clerical workers thought this).[95]

Clearly such evidence does not demonstrate a total equivalence between the outlooks of the affluent manual workers and clerical workers studied by Goldthorpe et al, but in the context of the earlier criticisms of the Goldthorpian interpretation of the 'money' model it suggests a complex picture of different strands and aspects of white-collar consciousness which may overlap and interplay with the perspectives of manual workers, and which would be ill-summarised in the conception of normative convergence without identity as it is formulated in either

the programmatic article or the final research monograph.

In the final section of this chapter I will consider the politics of the Affluent Worker study and in the next chapter I will look in more detail at the manner in which Goldthorpe and his colleagues analysed the work situation in the specialist 'industrial sociology' publications; but at this point, having examined in detail the manner in which the neo-weberian character of Goldthorpe and Lockwood's project of class analysis has structured the conceptualisation, specification and interpretation of the Affluent Worker investigation, it is possible to compare my assessment with others. I have already commented at some length on MacKenzie's 'evaluation and critique' which stresses the increasingly vague and 'diluted' character of the class analysis as the study developed.[96] I hope to have shown not only that the essential neo-weberian concern with market-based class analysis is sustained throughout the study, but also that the attention to the 'position in the division of labour' celebrated by MacKenzie was always an adjunct to that concern, while the contrast conceptions of manual and white-collar labour markets provide the key points of reference for the extended analyses of normative and relational aspects of class formation. In turn the systematic structuring of the analysis in terms of the distinctive experiences, exigencies and imagery of manual and clerical workers allows a spurious solution to the problem of class demarcation incipient in the market-situation starting point of the account. Again this owes as much to the superficial simplification of the market locations of the two categories of workers, and the related neglect of the social relations of capital and labour, as it does to the deficiencies in the treatments of the relational and the normative as such.

One strand of MacKenzie's discussion does, however, deserve additional comment, that concerning the extent to which the general structure and emphases of the Affluent Worker discussion can be seen to derive directly from the structure and emphases of the 'embourgeoisement' theorists whom they seek to criticise. This claim has also been made by Kemeny who argues that "the affluent worker project incorporates the misconceptions that have developed in the [embourgeoisement] debate itself, instead of, as might have been the case, clarifying them."[97] In this view the preoccupation with normative and relational aspects of 'social class', and the inattention to

production relations, reproduces the conceptual terrain of their opponents, and this tendency is reinforced by the shared empirical focus stipulated by the strategy of studying the 'critical case' most favourable to embourgeoisement; a point formulated particularly sharply by MacKenzie when he suggests that "not only does the study limit itself to a test of the embourgeoisement thesis; it focusses upon the most simple and sociologically unlikely version of the thesis."[98] This argument is apparently strengthened when it is noted that decreased attention to work situations in the Affluent Worker study can be seen to correspond to the shift of debate from engagement with marxian diagnoses of white-collar proletarianisation to contestation of vulgar weberian and psephological commentaries upon the bourgeoisification of affluent manual workers. Conversely, however, Goldthorpe and Lockwood clearly demonstrate their capacity to challenge and extend the frame of reference espoused by the embourgeoisement theorists, especially in their discussion of the relational aspect of social class (in respect of which they convincingly claim that "the neglect is more or less total" within embourgeoisement diagnoses[99]). Given this and other conceptual innovations it is more plausible to see the shift from the Blackcoated Worker to the Affluent Worker as, in important respects, a movement from a predominantly negative critique towards the elaboration of a more positive alternative approach to class analysis. Thus, while Goldthorpe and Lockwood clearly focussed upon analyses of embourgeoisement because of their popularity and political influence, and because they sought to contest what they regarded as mistaken political lessons as much as mistaken analyses, they must also be presumed to have found the conceptual and substantive arena which they reconstructed for that contest one central to their own project of class analysis. In these terms, then, the strengths and weaknesses of their analysis must be understood first in terms of their own commitment to neo-weberian class analysis, and only secondarily in terms of the terrain defined for them by their protagonists.

An alternative and insightful characterisation of the trajectory of the Luton research is that offered by Cousins, who sketches the changing emphases of the analysis in the following terms:

> "in the begining Lockwood envisaged class attitudes as emerging from work, market and status (largely status-at-work) situations. Later this broadened into an 'economic, normative and relational' model of causation of class feelings, i.e. a shift from structural

> location causation to a mixture of structural location and value causation had occurred. In the first full scale report of the Affluent Worker project an attack on the 'socio-technical systems' explanation of work group behaviour from a Weberian position caused yet a further shift in the direction of value causation to take place with the introduction of the concept of 'orientations to work'."[100]

I would not wish to contest this characterisation, but rather to add two qualifications. The first concerns the existence <u>throughout</u> the work of Lockwood and Goldthorpe of a tension between 'structural and value causation'. In the earlier studies an analysis of class situation took precedence but was validated in terms of a correspondence with values, as is clear from the critique of the notion of false consciousness. In the <u>Affluent Worker</u> monographs an analysis of market situation still serves as the essential point of departure for the conception of instrumental orientations. The second qualification concerns the context within which such shifts and tensions are to be understood, for I wish to suggest, harking back to the earlier discussion of Weber's class analysis, that they are intrinsic to the weberian project rather than simply the product of oscillation between different weberian ideal-type methodologies in the face of unexpected empirical findings. The ideal types come to play the central role they do precisely because they allow some sort of resolution of the boundary problem defined by the market starting point of the weberian analysis, without explicitly compromising the concern with class in favour of status groupings. In this context it is instructive to note that Lockwood's analysis of the dense cluster of immediate experiences which condition working class imagery actually acts as a bridge between two much simpler models of the relationship between class situation and class imagery: that of Dahrendorf who adopts the heterodox weberian starting point for class analysis of authority relations within imperatively coordinated associations and finds his analysis validated by the dichotomous imagery of us-and-them, and that of the <u>Affluent Worker</u> team who begin with the orthodox market situation starting point and find it validated by their discovery of instrumentalism and the money model.[101] From the latter vantage point non-instrumental orientations and non-pecuniary imagery actually come to be subsumed under a generalised conception of traditionalism, while market calculation among the affluent workers is necessarily short-term and self interested: thus the contrast of traditional and instrumental workers by Goldthorpe et al corresponds to the contrast and tension at the heart of Weber's own analysis,

summarised by Bryn Jones in the following terms:

> "the economic mode of action is individualistic, acquisitive, and instrumental-rational. Those characteristics preclude anything beyond temporarily expedient, and individually based, collective action....As has been seen, for action to be subjectively meaningful and motivated by concern for a collectivity, it must be guided by non-economic factors. In the last analysis such action must be operative within the sphere of values....Once class is located in the market it can never become social and it can never take on more than contingent intersubjectivity; certainly not the permanent meaningfulness of action oriented to the sphere of values."[102]

While it is evident that Goldthorpe and Lockwood seek to transcend the a-social market/status collectivity dichotomy as Weber himself sought to do, it is also clear that their characterisation of divisions within the working class in the context of their conceptualisation of a homogeneous labouring market boils down to this contrast between rational and non-rational orientations to that market.[103] In these various ways, then, the market starting point of their class analysis structured their construction of ideal-types linking structural and value causation, and underpinned their formulation of 'sociological' typologies with a most uncertain relationship to historical development and transfomation.[104]

A final diagnosis of the <u>Affluent Worker</u> project which deserves comment is that offered by Beynon and Nichols. They emphasise not only the empiricism of the British sociological tradition but also the centrality of the political tradition of Labourist reformism within professional sociology, and they construe the Luton project as the product of the interaction of these two features: they "find it difficult to resist the conclusion that the Cambridge team's commitment to social democracy permeates many important aspects of their analysis of the new working class -- not just their prescriptions for the Labour Party" but also "their notion of a privatised worker."[105] I do not dissent from this characterisation, and intend to explore the politics of the <u>Affluent Worker</u> study further below, but I think it is important to recognise that by this stage in the professional development of sociology such political interventions were clearly mediated by a professional culture involving increasingly sophisticated theoretical debate. Thus the political intervention of Goldthorpe and Lockwood was clearly mediated by sociological theorising which was inspired by Weber, and these authors operate with the central notions of market inequalities, distributive conflicts and the problems of political mobilisation which

Weber had developed in his own theoretical schema and political interventions.[106] In the context of what Beynon and Nichols term 'privatised sociology', the professionalisation of an academic discipline at one remove from immediate political strategy and action, their significance and impact within sociology owed as much to their appropriation and development of this professionally legitimate theoretical corpus as it did to the general 'social democratic' ambience of the sociological milieu; and this professional sociological intervention, removed from political organisation, must also have marked the character of its reception and impact on political practice.

The Politics of the Affluent Worker Study

The Affluent Worker study was quite explicitly a political intervention just as the embourgeoisement thesis was itself no mere academic enterprise. That thesis had been deployed, if not developed, to explain the electoral fate of the Labour Party in the 1950 s, and to underwrite political strategies for the remoulding of Labour politics. Indeed it was the property of political commentators and essayists as much as academics, in a nexus of relationships nicely symbolised in the report on an opinion survey commissioned by Socialist Commentary, a key forum of 'social democratic' political debate at this time. This report, entitled Must Labour Lose?, was outlined in the following terms:

> "in the first section of the book, Mark Abrams [consumer opinion researcher: A.E.] sets out the findings of this survey. In the second section Richard Rose [academic psephologist]...relates the findings to the world of politics...in the third section, Rita Hinden, Editor of Socialist Commentary, comments on the lessons for the Labour Party which, in her view, are implicit in the findings of the survey."[107]

In contesting embourgeoisement Goldthorpe and Lockwood were, then, contesting the associated political diagnosis and strategy, and they made this explicit from the first. This involved both the demolition of a spurious sociology — "as an explanation of politics, it has itself become a 'political' explanation, marshalling behind it a questionable sociology; as such the theory of the 'new working class' becomes a fit subject for sociological interpretation in its own right" remarked Lockwood — and a (tentative) consideration of alternative political strategies.[108] In the programmatic papers the discussion of political implications was limited to an emphasis upon the indeterminate

political consequences of working class affluence, while in the final research report the character and potential of such indeterminacy is only spelt out in slightly more detail in the final pages of the final chapter.[109] The crucial point, however, is that for Goldthorpe and Lockwood a sophisticated sociological critique of 'a questionable sociology' within the framework of professional sociological discourse was itself the central, and political, task, at one remove from debate internal to the labour movement.[110] This, then, provides the context for a consideration of the politics of the Affluent Worker study; a consideration which must include not only the positive prognoses which Goldthorpe et al counterpose to those of the embourgeoisement theorists but also the emerging argument against marxian analyses and political perspectives.

Turning first to the latter theme, it is evident that by the time that Goldthorpe and his colleagues were writing up their study there had been a substantial revival of marxism in comparison with the situation when the project was begun. This revival was a small affair in Britain but it did involve a substantial radicalisation of young people, especially students; the re-emergence of a politics to the left of Labour under the auspices of mainly semi-trotskyist groupings who gained a toe-hold among working-class activists; and a major burgeoning of intellectual creativity on an international scale, with British contributions particularly significant in social history. Thus both the intellectual and the political project represented by the Affluent Worker study faced a potential challenge from marxism, albeit a challenge from very varied and developing positions. The very fact that Marx's own work was complex, incomplete, sometimes contradictory and necessarily open-ended, while marxism had been both ossified and developed in quite diverse directions and traditions, meant that Goldthorpe et al could not address and confront a neat orthodoxy and had necessarily to select leading themes in their discussion. This is an important background to any assessment of their treatment, and disallows any simple dismissal of their characterisation (and their dismissal) of marxian analyses. Nevertheless I wish to suggest that their account is inadequate, in a manner which may owe something to the character of the contributions they focus upon but also owes much to their own perspectives. In this sense I wish to vindicate the point made by Beynon and Nichols when they claimed that the treatment of neo-marxists in the Affluent Worker publications was "less than adequate" while

"marxism is more varied and can be more sophisticated than the Cambridge team imply."[111]

There are two central themes in this 'Cambridge' characterisation of marxism. The first involves an identification of similar features and deficiencies in marxism to those already targeted in the critique of embourgeoisement; namely crude economic and technical determinism on one hand and speculative extrapolation of cultural and political concomitants on the other.[112] The second hinges on a critique of the notion of alienation, which rejects any implication that it might serve to differentiate and crystallise a coherent marxist account, then assimilates the notion to the positions already identified: technical determinism and speculative cultural diagnosis.[113] In each case the attempt of marxists to analyse the totality of social relations of production as a social totality with different moments or aspects constituted by the immediate production process, the labour market and social consumption and reproduction is ignored or suppressed; and in this sense the characterisation of marxism is severely distorted. A brief indication of these features in the Affluent Worker argument follows, concerned with the manner in which they are structured by the weberian class analysis of Goldthorpe et al.

The first theme is developed in the following way:

> "neo-marxist writers share with proponents of the embourgeoisement thesis a surprising amount of common ground as to the basic processes of change within advanced societies that are of greatest importance for the destiny of the working class. The argument between the two camps .... essentially, it is about the ways in which the changes in question are being experienced and given meaning....the debate is one that centres not on questions of income, standards of living, conditions of work or patterns of residence but on questions of social values, social relationships and social consciousness."[114]

The manner in which this argument dissociates technical and economic trends from 'social relationships', so that a focus on production relations is transmuted into an a-social determinism, clearly parallels Goldthorpe and Lockwood's own conceptualisation of the economic, normative and relational aspects of class; but it clearly distorts the character of marxian analysis. This will be evident when the Affluent Worker discussion of alienation is considered, but is also apparent at another point in their argument where they assimilate marxism and the embourgeoisement thesis to a common mould; that is when they consider Engels as a precursor of the latter approach. They identify his

discussion of the 'bourgeois proletariat' with embourgeoisement arguments, with the single difference that "this process [is] being now understood, however, not as some temporary irregularity, occasioned by uneven development of capitalism, but rather as an integral part of the evolution of industrial society."[115] However, for all the limitations of immediate and ephemeral political commentary and the inadequacies of the 'labour aristocracy' thesis, it is evident that the analysis of working class respectability developed by Engels addressed more than simply 'affluence' or even 'prosperity as it was conditional upon the dominant position of British capital'. For what he was concerned with were a broader set of transformations in both the social organisation of production and the political relations between labour and capital, and these transformations were seen both as a basis of the rise to dominance of British capital and as sustained for a time by that dominance. These features of the Engels diagnosis were clearly spelt out in his 1892 preface to The Condition of the Working Class in England where he wrote:

> "thus, a gradual change came over the relations between both classes. The Factory Acts, once the bugbear of all manufacturers, were not only willingly submitted to, but their expansion into acts, regulating almost all trades was tolerated. Trades' Unions, hitherto considered inventions of the devil himself, were now petted and patronised as perfectly legitimate institutions, and as useful means of spreading sound economical doctrines amongst the workers. Even strikes, than which nothing had been more nefarious up to 1848, were now gradually found out to be occasionally very useful, especially when provoked by the masters themselves, at their own time."[116]

These developments, which embraced only the factory hands and the great Trades' Unions organising "grown-up men" in any thorough-going fashion, both nurtured and fed off "the manufacturing monopoly of England"; but the social relations involved (not just relative prosperity) were to become increasingly crisis ridden and limited in their embrace with the intensification of international competition. It should be evident that the equation of this approach with that of post-war embourgeoisement theorists has involved a considerable distortion accomplished by the translation of an attempt to analyse class relations into a mere extrapolation of economic trends.

Similar problems beset the second, and fundamental, theme of the Cambridge critique, that concerned with the concept of alienation. There they read marxian accounts as claims that the immediate technology of

production is the singular basis of the experience of waged labour as compulsion and an associated instrumentalism and privatisation. Thus:

> "the neo-marxist position comes close to that of largely non-marxist industrial sociologists who have taken employees' immediate experience of work within a given form of technical organisation as critically determining their industrial attitudes and behaviour at all levels and, in some cases, as also shaping their more general socio-political orientations." [117]

Having imputed this position to marxists -- and without explaining its relationship to the marxian focus upon ownership and non-ownership which was the target of Lockwood's critique in the Blackcoated Worker -- they attack it in the following terms:

> "specifically, it may be objected that there is in fact no direct and uniform association between immediate, shop-floor work experience and employee attitudes and behaviour that are of wider reference. This is so because the effects of technologically determined conditions of work are always mediated through the meanings that men give to their work and through their own definitions of their work situation, and because these meanings and definitions in turn vary with the particular sets of wants and expectations that men bring to their employment." [118]

Counterposed in this fashion marxism, identified with the immediate concomitants of work, is dismissed in favour of an apparently autonomous range of motives and meanings. One way of reading this would be in terms of the shifts in focus emphasised in different ways by MacKenzie and by Cousins; that is from a structural determination in terms of location in the division of labour, which served as the basis for the critique of ownership/non-ownership in the Blackcoated Worker, to a value determination in terms of the emergent wants and definitions of workers, used as the critical lever against the notion of alienation specified in the Affluent Worker. However I have already suggested that Lockwood's earlier work involved a process of double-fitting between ostensible differences in consciousness and work concomitants of market situations, while in the Affluent Worker monograph orientations are in fact mediated and embedded in distinctive market situations. Though there is a fluctuation in the discussion of orientations and constraints in the market within the Affluent Worker, with the constraints of wage-labour emphasised in comparison with white-collar work and the scope for choice emphasised in comparison with positions which stress the constraints inherent in waged-work, the point of reference remains the market

situation. In their critique of their technicist rendition of alienation the labour market is cast in virtually pure, neo-classical terms as the neutral market mechanism, the technical medium, which transmits and realises autonomous preferences: and the emphasis is on a trade-off of higher pay against a quite wide range of skilled and white-collar alternatives since "as many as fifty-eight per cent had at some stage been in either nonmanual or craft employment."[119] On the other hand, in the discussion of the 'world of work' the constraints of specific manual labour markets were emphasised, though as has been seen this involved a simplification of the manner in which manual and clerical workers labour markets diverged, and a rhetorical deployment of the notion of the sale of labour power, in pinpointing "a fairly distinctive and widely felt dilemma of working class life: the dilemma, that is, of having to <u>choose between</u> work which offers variety, scope for initiative and relative autonomy and work which, <u>for any skill level</u>, affords the highest going rate of economic return."[120] Thus what is counterposed to a narrow technicism is a process of market choice of indeterminate and, according to the polemical target, shifting magnitude. Behind this ambiguity in the characterisation of the labour market stands the dilemma of class demarcation as it confronts neo-weberian class theory founded on autonomous and myriad market situations.

The critical question at this point concerns the adequacy of the Cambridge critique of alienation which is founded on this market sociology. This hinges upon the adequacy of the counter-position of production and the market around which that critique revolves. If Marx's own discussions are taken as a yardstick, such a counter-position is manifestly inadequate. His analysis of alienation, even in the <u>Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts</u> and certainly in developed form in the analysis of the dynamics of exploitation in <u>Capital</u>, addresses the manner in which workers are alienated in both production and market relations and in ways which develop through both the transformation of subordination in production and the reinforcement of dependency upon labour power and the purchase of commoditised use values in the market. In this context he attempts to theorise the forms of choice within the labour market and in consumption which characterise wage labour 'free in a double sense', as in the following passage on consumption drawn from the discussion of rapid accumulation in <u>Capital</u>:

> "under the conditions of accumulation supposed thus far, which conditions are those most favourable to the labourers, their

relation of dependence upon capital takes on a form endurable or, as Eden says: 'easy and liberal'. Instead of becoming more intensive with the growth of capital, this relation of dependence only becomes more extensive.....a larger part of their own surplus-product, always increasing and continually transformed into additional capital, comes back to them in the shape of means of payment, so that they can extend the circle of their enjoyments; can make some additions to their consumption-fund of clothes, furniture, &c., and can lay by small reserve-funds of money. But just as little as better clothing, food, and treatment, and a larger peculium, do away with the exploitation of the slave, so little do they set aside that of the wage-worker."[121]

Thus, for Marx at least, alienation cannot be defined simply as a product of the work situation but as a property of the relationship between capital and labour in both production and the market; while in his developed analysis he addresses the developing and contradictory form alienation takes in the course of capitalist development rather than simply deploying an "old philosophical anthropology of production" which should be displaced by "a new empirical sociology of consumption."[122] Of course Goldthorpe et al quite properly attended to contemporary marxist commentaries with their varied emphases, while Marx's own work is both incomplete and unsatisfactory in many respects, but this core of the marxian approach, the concern with the social relation between labour and capital as it is particularised in both production and the market, is evident in virtually the whole diverse corpus of marxian literature. Thus Goldthorpe and his colleagues significantly distort the position they attack, in a way which is intelligible given their market starting point but which seriously vulgarises their treatment.

This is evident even in the selectivity of their treatment of contemporary positions, even though that selection was related to the notoriety of such authors as Marcuse and Mallet. It should be evident from the preceeding quotation from Marx that he by no means deployed a simple critique of 'false wants', but was concerned to explore the contradictions between the increasing production of use-values within capitalism, the 'historical and moral element' in workers' consumption, and the commoditised and delimited character of consumption. In this context Marcuse's 'one-dimensional man' account represented an idiosyncratic extreme development of marxian analysis, which was contested within marxism as by Goldthorpe et al.[123] In relation to Mallet

the critics were on firmer ground since his emphasis on the antagonism between advancing technical productive forces and archaic property relations has been a major, though not uncontested, strand in Western marxism from the mechanical evolutionism of the Second International onwards.[124] However, even in Mallet's case Goldthorpe et al not only assimilate his position to a narrow technical determinism, which slights his concern to analyse the contradictory imperatives of control and innovation bearing upon capital and the implications of this for the social as well as technical organisation of production, but more importantly gloss over the controversial character of Mallet's position on automation within French marxism, alongside other analyses which were more modest in their prognoses and less technicist in their conceptualisations.[125] In summary, what I wish to suggest is that Goldthorpe et al never properly confront the core of marxian arguments, which have at least sought to analyse the character of the developing relation between capital and labour in both production and the market, for as Beynon and Nichols say tersely in response to the Affluent Worker argument "a richer and more valid interpretation of Marx's use of alienation is one that locates it within the relations of production and not in 'work'."[126] Only when assessed against the narrow and inconsistent measuring rod of market situations and concomitant work variations could such a programme of analysis be dismissed as a 'philosophical' rather than 'sociological' conception; and then only at the expense of any attempt to understand the inter-relationship between ownership and non-ownership of capital, fates in the labour market and social relations in the immediate production process. Finally, on this score, it is important to insist that though Goldthorpe et al make some telling criticisms of some particular marxist contributions, particularly the Marcusian treatment of one-dimensionality and manipulated consciousness on one hand and the incipient technicism of Mallet on the other, this does not validate their own narrow market sociology or represent an adequate engagement with marxian positions; though it should also be recognised that the positions they criticised were by no means simply aberrations but do indicate real ambiguities and potential pathologies within marxism.

Having suggested that the Affluent Worker critique of marxism remained fragmentary and superficial alongside the initial sophistication of their mapping of a neo-weberian approach to class analysis, it now remains only to consider the more positive political prognoses which they attach to their study. In their programmatic 1963 article Goldthorpe and Lockwood contented themselves with the arguments that there were no

solid bases for the embourgeoisement diagnosis and its political prognostications; and that convergence towards instrumental collectivism, should that prove evident, might have quite open political potentials arising from a calculative and economically aspiring approach to politics and, possibly, from resentment at status exclusion.[126] In the final research monograph Goldthorpe et al sought to develop this later diagnosis of open political potentials: first by characterising the relationship which their affluent workers had to the established institutions of the labour movement, the trade unions and the Labour Party; and then by considering the scope for further political mobilisation. On the first count they drew upon material presented in the earlier 'political' and 'industrial' monographs to document a substantial but instrumental connection with both trade unions and the Labour Party. In the case of trade unions there was substantial union membership, some of it apparently coincidental with the achievement of 'affluence'; little participation in branch affairs; a significant current of criticism of trade union power, taken to imply scepticism about national union leaderships; a tendency to focus on collective advance rather than collective struggle; and/but substantial workplace participation and interest in shop-floor organisation.[127] Goldthorpe et al summarise this pattern by suggesting that "these men were attracted by what would often be the individual, or at any rate highly sectional, advantages of belonging to a labour organisation," but go on to argue that:

> "there is no necessary implication that workers' attachment to unionism, or to the underlying belief in the importance of collective means, will thereby be weakened...there appears to be no reason why trade unionism should not become increasingly 'self-interested and 'particularistic' in its emphasis without losing its appeal and its strength."[128]

A similar argument is advanced in regard to the Labour Party. Again these affluent workers evidenced considerable support, in terms of voting allegiances, for the party, especially when sunken middle-class workers were excluded; and such support was related to identification Labour as a 'class party', but usually only in the limited terms of "the party being somewhat more likely than the Conservatives to favour the working-class interest", while a substantial minority of Labour supporters disapproved of the alliance between the Party and trade unions.[129] Thus the Cambridge researchers portray a pattern of attitudes and actions consistent with privatisation, instrumentalism and a 'pecuniary' model of society, and betraying little sign of the wider solidarities and

sense of a labour movement with an historic mission, ascribed to the 'traditional working class'. They summarise their diagnosis at this point in the following terms:

> "First, that it is mistaken to suppose that the economic and social attributes characteristic of 'vanguard' groups within the industrial labour force are incompatible with their continued adherence to the traditional forms of working-class collectivism; that is trade unionism and electoral support for the Labour Party. Secondly, however, that although these groups may still regard the unions and the Labour Party as organisations which have some special claim on their allegiance, their attachment to them could certainly become of an increasingly instrumental -- and thus conditional -- kind, and one devoid of all sense of participation in a class movement seeking structural changes in society or even pursuing more limited ends through concerted action."[130]

Thus they see the situation in terms of a persistence of working-class collectivism, but "the meaning of this collectivism and the nature of its objectives" have become uncertain and contestable in the context of the exigencies of relative affluence.[131] Though in some respects they appear to have portrayed a collectivism with a narrowly instrumental and calculative content they insist that simply sectional instrumentalism is only "one undoubted possibility: another, and quite different, one is" also open, and could be mobilised by strategic interventions by the Labour Party.[132] Before turning to this recommended mobilisation, however, some observations on their diagnosis of the relationship between affluent workers and labour institutions are necessary.

In their initial treatment of the conception of independent convergence towards instrumental collectivism among both manual and white-collar workers Goldthorpe and Lockwood emphasised not only affluence and geographical relocation but also "twenty years of near full employment" accompanied by "the progressive bureaucratisation of trade unionism and the institutionalisation of industrial conflict."[133] However, though the significance of these developments is reiterated in the final monograph (in a long quotation from the earlier paper) their detailed character and their impact on workers' experience is hardly discussed in an explicit fashion. The specification of the research site involved, as has been seen, the selection of firms with 'progressive employment policies' and 'harmonious industrial relations', but the theoretical focus on market situations and the methodological focus on workers' attitudes together mean that the dynamics of local collective bargaining

arrangements, let alone their relationship to any broader pattern of bureaucratisation, remained thoroughly obscured. The manner in which developments within the labour movement on a national scale -- in the organisation of trade unionism and collective negotiation, and in the intervention of governments in industrial relations -- may have conditioned workers' involvements in, and assessments of, trade unions and the Labour Party remains outside the purview of the Affluent Worker analysis until in the very last pages the Wilson government of the late 1960's is seen as undermining Labour loyalties.[134] As both Westergaard and Beynon and Nichols have suggested, Goldthorpe et al fail to consider the possibility that the earlier attenuation of commitment to labour movement institutions, documented in their research, could also stem from the limitations of such institutions rather than from the specific labour market niche occupied by the affluent worker.[135] It could, of course, be argued that such a source of attenuated commitment was more visible by the end of the sixties, following the experience of the 1964-70 Labour government to which Goldthorpe et al refer, than it had been in 1964; and no doubt the critics' comments were fueled by that experience.[136] However that does not explain the hiatus in the Cambridge analysis, between the initial remarks about institutionalisation and the final lament about the Wilson government. This gap may in part be explained, as Beynon and Nichols suggest, by reference to the Labourist commitments of the authors, but it must also be seen as underwritten by the particular fleshing out of a weberian class analysis which they adopt. Their neglect of the broader character of class relations even in the context of collective bargaining arises from their concern to trace the interplay between immediately experienced conditions and consciousness, and their focus upon market situations at the expense of relations between labour and capital. This in no way denies that much remains to be explored and explained about the relationship between trade union bureaucratisation, Labourism in government and the development of class consciosness and action, so that in that sense the critics only point up a critical area of analysis neglected by the Luton study. However, as will be seen below, this 'taking-for-granted' of labour institutions remains a central, and much criticised, feature of the suggestions for mobilisation with which Goldthorpe et al conclude their research.

Turning, then, to those suggestions, Goldthorpe and his colleagues define their position in terms of an anti-evolutionism and relaxation of determinism which, they hold, differentiates their view of 'open'

possibilities from the political prognoses of both marxists and embourgeoisement theorists.[137] This view has two aspects: on the one hand the existence of potentials for broader political demands and aspirations incipient within instrumental collectivism and privatisation, and on the other the crucial role of political leadership by the Labour Party in the articulation of such potentials. The interplay between these aspects is clearly emphasised in the characterisation of political leadership as:

> "purposive action on the part of elites and organisations, aimed at giving a specific and politically relevant meaning to grievances, demands and aspirations, which have hitherto been of a sub-political kind, and at thus mobilising mass support for a programme or movement."[138]

A number of crucial questions have to be addressed to this analysis: firstly, how far does this analysis grow out of the earlier treatment of instrumentalism and pecuniary consciousness; secondly, how far does it provide a consistent diagnosis; and thirdly, how far does it genuinely differentiate the political prognoses of Goldthorpe et al from marxists or embourgeoisement theorists? Each of these questions will be considered in turn.

Firstly, then, what is the relationship of this diagnosis to the earlier analysis? Westergaard commented on the final monograph, and particularly on this final discussion, that "in their conclusions ... the authors recognize a degree of 'openness' in the socio-political prospects for the future ... of which there is no hint in the interpretations of the earlier volumes", while on the other hand I have already noted that a programmatic commitment to the 'openness' of political prospects was made by Goldthorpe and Lockwood in their initial overview of their argument.[139] The critical question concerns the character of this openness and its relationship to the other phases of the developed argument. The first aspect of this relationship is that between instrumentalism and the 'sub-political grievances' which are to be mobilised politically. Goldthorpe et al argue that such grievances are incipient in instrumentalism in two ways: firstly there are "wants and expectations [which] are being devalued or suppressed, but not to the extent that deprivation ceases to be felt", and secondly there is the fact that "aspirations of a new type arise — aspirations that are less closely related to consumption of a private character and less easily fulfilled."[140] Neither of these sources of grievance is dealt with in any

detail, but some indications of each are provided. Those arising from aspirations related to collective consumption are given most attention, and a comparison which I wish to make later justifies quotation in full of this aspect of the argument:

> "an intensification of socio-political debate and a widening awareness of the extent of inequality in British society would be of definite advantage to Labour as regards .... politicising the new aspirations that may be expected to emerge among the working class in the wake of affluence. Rising ambitions for children's careers have already been mentioned; and one might further suggest, for example, a growing concern for an improved urban environment and demands for more extensive public provision for recreation and leisure generally. New aspirations in these directions are not a long step away from wanting high material standards of living in a domestic context; but they are ones much more likely to be blocked in a society whose institutions are far more efficiently geared to producing private affluence than to organising equal opportunities for individual growth and self-fulfilment. Thus, support for policies designed to realise such aspirations would in fact virtually imply support for policies of a radical cast in relation to education, social welfare, town and regional planning, and so on."[141]

What should be apparent from this quotation is that Goldthorpe and his colleagues have <u>extrapolated</u> certain aspirations from their own presentation of the perspectives of affluent workers, which they as analysts foresee as in collision with established institutions, but they do not trace the generation of such aspirations or the obstacles they will meet in any depth. Given their emphasis upon the instrumental integration of the affluent worker on the basis of a market niche which has facilitated private consumption their analysis cannot grow out of that earlier discussion. This is even more evident in the case of the other source of grievances, 'devalued or suppressed wants' which must generally refer to workplace deprivations. In this context they propose that "Labour .. seek actively to stimulate and shape political demands which may as yet be relatively weak and unformed .... demands for some substantial measure of employee participation in the control of industrial enterprises and, more generally, for the democratisation of economic decision-making".[142] But the extent to which this is at odds with their earlier analysis is revealed by a comparison of the relevant footnote, where they highlight, for once, a substantial minority feeling among their sample that 'unions should also try to get a say in

management', and their earlier treatment of the material cited there as evidence of "the definition of work as a means ...no very widespread desire among these men that their unions should strive to give them a larger role in the actual running of the plant; this is a responsibility in which they are not anxious to share."[143] In all, then, their discovery of incipient themes of potential grievance, which nevertheless remain so fragile that they "could remain unrealised indefinitely, and conceivably to the point of extinction" should the Labour Party fail to articulate them, contrasts oddly with the earlier robust denunciation of false consciousness, and emphasis on the correspondence between market situation and a parochial instrumental collectivism.[144] In these respects the manner in which Goldthorpe et al develop their discussion of the open political prospects does appear to depart sharply from their earlier analysis and to be in some respects inconsistent with it; though the central ambiguity of their market based treatment, concerning the whole relation of constraint and choice within the market, affords some space within which the discovery of incipient grievances can be more or less vaguely lodged.

The other aspect of the relationship between earlier analysis and political prognosis concerns the role of labour movement institutions, a theme which has already been touched on above. As was suggested then the absence of any developed analysis of the institutionalisation of trade unions and Labourism also corresponds to the focus of their analysis of class formation upon immediate, and particularly market-niche based, determinants of consciousness; a focus which left obscure any reciprocal impact of labour institutions upon working class consciousness and action. Hence what appeared to Westergaard as a wider question of the longer term role of Labourism, in which "the scepticism of many workers ... would be a natural outcome of that process of elaborate institutionalisation of class conflict which has made the Labour Party and the trade unions visibly ineffective as instruments of social protest and societal change", appeared for Goldthorpe et al only as a contemporary development in which "it is not hard to envisage the frustration of the affluent worker's private economic ambitions leading to still further attenuation of the links between localised, trade union collectivism and electoral support for the Labour Party."[145] As Westergaard emphasises, at this point in the Affluent Worker the analysis of 'openness' becomes premissed upon a "near-total autonomy of the party leadership vis a vis its grassroots" and "that assumption in turn hinges on the further

assumption that the new working class is essentially passive in political terms."[146] It should be recognised that there is within the Cambridge analysis a theoretical rationale for this privileging of the role of current political leadership: this is implicit in the ideal type contrast between traditionalistic workers "encapsulated in social systems which provide them with few alternative conceptions of what is possible, desirable, and legitimate" and "the privatised worker [who] is more likely to be reached by mass communications and more readily influenced by its message. Because of his relative social isolation, he may be more exposed to impersonal influence."[147] However, the pristine character of the communal experience and social imagery of the so-called traditional worker has been sharply challenged in the debate about working-class social imagery, and Goldthorpe et al themselves recognise that Labourism has been more than a simple reflection of communal solidarities, since it has been "capable of transcending the particularism" of such solidarities.[148] On the other hand the critics of the portrait of the isolated privatised worker with a 'de-socialised' and 'inchoate' social imagery have challenged this quasi-Marcusian view, both on the grounds of the critical strands within such imagery and in terms of the continuing relevance of a social nexus in the workplace which represents an experience of both conflict and collective action which is likely to underpin such strands, despite the institutionalisation of the official labour movement.[149] This pinpoints the crucial divergence between the authors of the Affluent Worker series and their marxist critics. While the focus of the former on market relations brings a failure to analyse the dynamics of workplace organisation and parochial instrumental collectivism, the focus of the latter upon the 'cash nexus' and the social relations of production serves to underpin an appreciation of such organisation as a crucial pole of experience and mobilisation which is likely to be in tension with the institutionalised labour movement. Only in the absence of any serious attention to workplace organisation as itself a seedbed of potential and incipient grievances can it have been possible for the schematic contrast between traditionalistic and rational calculative market action to have underpinned the depiction of a passive working class constituency slumbering until awakened by a radical Labour programme. Once more, then, the market sociology of the Affluent Worker studies defines the parameters of the analysis, both by devaluing the significance of the social relations of production and by sustaining a tendentious ideal-type contrast between traditionalism and market calculation.

The above discussion has traced both continuities and discontinuities in the relationship between the general analysis of class formation provided in the Affluent Worker in the Class Structure and the specific political prognoses in the final chapter. The discontinuities are those noted by Westergaard: the discovery of incipient sub-political grievances concerned with both collective consumption and (even) worker participation, and the elevation of the Labour Party to its pivotal role in the prospective development of working class consciousness. However, these features of the political prognosis remain structured by the fundamental focus on market situations which characterised the major arguments about class demarcation throughout the monograph: this focus served as the point of departure for the bland and unexplicated characterisation of incipient grievances, and also appears to have underpinned the treatment of the autonomy of the Labour leadership in the guise of the traditionalism/instrumentalism typification. More generally and speculatively it is worth noting that a major feature of the neo-classical paradigm which underpinned Weber's sociology was debate about the substantive irrationality of the market in relation to distributive inequalities and about the patterns of state intervention and political mobilisation required to address such irrationalities. The emphasis placed upon collective consumption in the final pages of the Affluent Worker study can be seen as fitting clearly within this tradition.

The final question about the political perspectives of Goldthorpe et al concerns the distinctiveness of their position over against both marxists and embourgeoisement theorists. I will resumé the issues in dispute between the Cambridge authors and their marxian critics in a moment, but first I wish to suggest that Goldthorpe et al claim a sharper distinction from the politics of embourgeoisement than is justified for at least some of the strategists of affluence. For though such strategists accept the argument that affluence erodes class loyalties and the potency of the appeal of Labour as a class party, while Goldthorpe et al argue such erosion is much more problematic and thus for the reinvigoration of Labour's class appeal, the content which is given to these arguments converges in a number of respects despite their implied novelty in the final pages of the Affluent Worker. To be more precise, a comparison between Goldthorpe et al and 'the lessons for Labour' drawn by Rita Hinden in Must Labour Lose? reveals a shared critique of both marxist and 'centrist' determinism; a common emphasis on the active mobilising role of Labour policy and persuasion; a similar repudiation of the

the notion that workers have been seduced by a superficial consumerism; and a similar emphasis on the public provision of collective support and amenities as the focus for political remobilisation.[150] There are significant differences in their approaches which relate back to their different understandings of class. Hinden clearly utilises the embourgeoisement analysis to reaffirm the centrality of an ethical socialism which transcends class divisions and interests, and this is related to an emphasis upon Labour's concern for those unorganised and dependant on the welfare state; while Goldthorpe et al build an appeal for a new class politics upon their delineation of the distinctive labour market position of manual workers, and are less concerned with the 'amorality' of sectional workplace organisation among the affluent. However, despite these differences in the idiom of their discussions, the convergence in political prognoses is perhaps more notable than the divergences. This will be evident, I think, from a comparison of the final pages of the final Affluent Worker monograph, and in particular some of the passages quoted above, and such arguments as the following extracted from Hinden:

> "Although workers as a class are vastly better off than they once were, they are still far less well off than the businessman living in luxury off his expense account or his capital gains. They still need collective action, not only in industry where this is obvious, but in politics where there is still a clear clash of interests between the haves and the have-nots on questions of the distribution of property and incomes. But in the contemporary environment, when workers are certainly no longer defenceless, a simple class appeal so easily degenerates into class selfishness, which has nothing to do with socialist idealism, and arouses the strongest antagonisms among the rest of the community....
>
> "Once people have a secure livelihood and a reasonable standard of comfort they can turn their minds to other things than the struggle for existence and the satisfaction of physical needs. And when they do, they cannot but become aware of the appalling ways in which our society fails to cater for their social needs....
>
> "Here is Labour's opportunity. For the choice between these rival impulses is a genuine one — it is not inevitable that people must incline one way or the other. If Labour now took up the cudgels on behalf of social responsibility, in the terms that our contemporary society would appreciate, the imagination of many who have been deaf to the class appeal might be fired....
>
> "The stage is being reached when people may be less intent on aquiring more personal possessions, and more anxious to improve the quality of their lives and environment in ways that can only be met by social expenditure. People too, once poverty and insecurity are left behind, may seek a more active democracy at their work, where their status is still one of decided inferiority....
>
> "There are many sides to 'human nature', some come to the fore in some circumstances and some in others; the leadership given — intellectual, social, and not least political — is often decisive"[151]

It is certainly true, as I have already noted, that Hinden is less sensitive to the deprivations experienced by comparatively affluent manual workers than are Goldthorpe and his colleagues (though note, as a point of convergence, her reference to the decidedly inferior status of such workers in the workplace), but her commentary departs from the determinism imputed to the embourgeoisement theorists in precisely the same manner as their own argument. Namely, by an emphasis on incipient interests in collective provision and on their articulation by Labour leadership. Though it may be suggested that such a departure from determinism was not prefigured in the preceeding analysis of embourgeoisement developed by Abrams and Rose, a similar point can be made about the relationship between analysis and prognosis in the Affluent Worker study itself. Thus the politics of the Cambridge team is much less clearly differentiated from other strands of interpretation of the politics of 'affluence' than Goldthorpe et al themselves suggest. This may be taken as a further indication not only that the interpretation they offer of the privatised instrumental worker is, as Beynon and Nichols argue, the delineation of a Labourist political actor, but also that the 'politics' of the academic repudiation of a vulgar weberianism harnessed to psephology, in the context of the development of a professionalised sociology, was probably more central to the trajectory of the Luton study than more practical forms of politics.

If the Cambridge group did not acknowledge their convergence with the political strategists of embourgeoisement they did acknowledge what they regarded as an ironic convergence with some marxists, though not with marxism. This concerned what they termed a paradoxical focus, among contemporary marxists, upon 'superstructural factors'; and in particular an emphasis, among less 'mechanical' marxists, upon the radical potential of escalating expectations and of emancipation from the narrow horizons of communal solidarities, and upon the central role of established Labourist institutions in giving a particular, demobilising, expression to working class interests.[152] Such themes were developed in different ways by both Westergaard and Anderson, in work cited by Goldthorpe et al when they noted "our assessment of future possibilities...has certain obvious affinities with theirs.[153]" However, the repudiation of analyses couched in terms of alienation, on the dual but unsatisfactory grounds of being technicist and philosophical, reasserts the divide between the two approaches in these terms, leaving them free to appropriate as a-marxist any subtle treatment of 'superstructural factors'. Much of the earlier

discussion of alienation in this chapter was concerned to question the characterisation of marxism upon which such a claim rests, and to suggest, more positively, that the playing off of technical determinism against superstructural cultural processes arises out of their own approach to class analysis, pivoted upon the market, rather than from any adequate characterisation of marxism. Thus Goldthorpe et al dismiss the couching of arguments in "the language of alienation", without properly confronting the analysis of the social relations of production which more adequately differentiates marxism from the neo-weberian concern with the discrimination of distinctive market situations and their social correlates. Once the contrast between the two positions is seen in these terms, however, analyses of orientations, social imagery and labour institutions cannot simply be defined as 'super-structural' but must be seen as embedded in distinctive understandings of the character and dynamics of the social relations to which these orientations, images and institutions relate. This has been a central theme of marxist critics of the Affluent Worker study who have sought to argue not only that the social imagery of these workers embraces critical and conflictual elements but also to suggest that those elements are likely to be informed and sustained by the experience of the 'brittle' cash nexus and conflicts over the disposition and intensity of labour power; not only that the role played by the central and bureaucratic institutions of the labour movement may have been a demobilising one but also that the retreat from the union branch to shop-floor workplace organisation was "one away from some inherently conservative features" towards a partial alternative locus of organisation to that of the Labour Party.[154] Some of the ramifications of such alternative analyses will be followed up in later chapters, but at this point it is apposite to suggest that the intellectual engagement with marxism both as analysis and prognosis was once more marked by the neo-weberian framework of class analysis adopted by Goldthorpe et al, and in a fashion which is not simply justified by the character of contemporary marxism. One final indication of this was the manner in which the Cambridge authors dealt with marxian debate about the general economic dynamic of contemporary capitalism: not, for marxists, something distinct from the relation between labour and capital and transformations in the organisation of production, of course; though the categories of economic and technical determinism and relegation of economic 'trends' to some external status over against social process in the Goldthorpe and Lockwood analysis implies such a disjunction. In the introductory chapter of the final monograph the authors note that one aspect of marxian debate in response to the

unprecedented period of growth and prosperity associated with the post-war boom had been "some radical rethinking on the part of Marxian economists" such as Baran and Sweezy; but no further attention is given to this rethinking, or its implications for a marxian analysis of the imperatives informing the management of such large multi-national companies as Vauxhall, Skefko or Laporte, or what this might mean for those who sold their labour power to such firms.[155] While it would be fair to say that Baran and Sweezy themselves concentrate on delineating the relations between giant companies and the implications of 'monopolistic competition' at a macro level, and that they themselves offer a contentious analysis which in some respects converges with a technically specialised neo-Keynsian macro-economics, it nevertheless remains remarkable that Goldthorpe et al could open and close consideration of the logic of corporate capitalist enterprise, apparently so germaine to their topic, in the space of one page.[156] It is intelligible however, not in terms of any developed critique of marxism but in terms of a class analysis which focusses upon the demarcation of clusters of market situations rather than upon the relations between labour and capital. In addition it should be noted that such a procedure fits comfortably within the established academic division of labour between a neo-classical economics concerned with market transactions and equilibria and a sociology which traces the social correlates and social constraints related to such markets; whereas even <u>academic</u> marxism of the sort which was emerging in Britain in the late 1960s represented a challenge to such an academic division of labour and its associated professionalised specialisation. In this connection it would be interesting to know more of the manner in which disciplinary competences were defined in the specific institutional context within which the Cambridge team worked, the Department of Applied Economics at Cambridge.

<u>Summary</u>

Having traced the weberian roots of the Goldthorpe and Lockwood approach and charted some of the dilemmas facing that approach in the previous chapter, I have sought in this one to examine in some detail the manner in which the weberian framework and its dilemmas structured the critiques, the positive analysis and the political prognosis contained within the major study of the Affluent Worker project. This has involved not only the location in these terms of the controversy surrounding the <u>Affluent Worker</u> interpretation of the social imagery and political potential of their affluent manual workers, but also

consideration of the more neglected question of the adequacy of their investigation of <u>their</u> central issue, the demarcation of the class boundary between manual and white-collar workers. In relation to this latter issue I have suggested, first, that there was an irreducible degree of arbitrariness in the manner in which Goldthorpe et al escape from the problem of diverse market situations, by an overdrawn characterisation of the unity of the manual workers' labour market and its distinctiveness from that of white-collar workers. Secondly, I have argued that the further development of their analysis of the formation of a critical class demarcation in relational and normative terms, based on this distinctiveness, is both inconsistent in the significance it seeks to attach to particular facets of such class formation (oscillating particularly between the emphasis of shared market exigencies and shared cultural traits) and over-enthusiastic in the significance assigned to small variations in attitudes and conduct. At the same time the ideal-type methodology adopted by the authors tends to gloss over these deficiencies, and hence to facilitate the 'completion' of a neo-weberian class analysis from which any real consideration of the social relations between labour and capital has been expunged. This in turn underpins the characterisation of the class experience of the affluent worker in terms of a stable instrumentalism grounded in an ambiguously theorised balance of choice and constraint, and the associated rather 'flat' analysis of social imagery; again without any proper discussion of the dynamics of employment relations within the workplace, or the manner in which collective bargaining may modulate those relations. Finally I have sought to explore the manner in which the conceptual terrain of a market-situation focussed analysis structured the selective, and in some part distorted, terms in which Goldthorpe and his colleagues engaged with both embourgeoisement and marxist analyses. I have related this as much to the professional commitment of the team to a neo-weberian conception of the sociological enterprise, and of class analysis in particular, as to any more <u>direct</u> preoccupation with Labourist politics. In these ways I hope to have located and rounded out the critiques of the <u>Affluent Worker</u> study mounted by Westergaard, Beynon and Nichols and the like, and to have underlined the continuities in the general framework of class analysis which contain and qualify the shifts of emphasis noted by MacKenzie and Cousins.

I now intend to turn to a more specific discussion of the explicitly 'industrial' studies associated with the <u>Affluent Worker</u> project, to

consider further both the manner in which the analysis of class situation was pared down to its market-situation essentials in the course of the project, and the strengths and weaknesses of their analysis of the experience and consciousness of the different categories of affluent manual workers within that market framework.

chapter 2:footnotes

1. Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence" p 138

2 The continuing differentiation of manual and clerical workers in these respects was documented by Dorothy Wedderburn and Christine Craig "Relative deprivation in work" in Dorothy Wedderburn (ed) Poverty, Inequality and Class Structure Cambridge 1974.

3 David Lockwood and John Goldthorpe "The Manual Worker: Affluence, Aspirations, and Assimilations" British Sociological Association Conference 1962 pp 13-17; Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 24.

4 It is called 'the most serious oversight" of embourgeoisement theorists in John Goldthorpe and David Lockwood "Not So Bourgeois After All" New Society 18 October 1962.

5 Marshall in Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Not So Bourgeois" p 19, and Guttsman in Lockwood and Goldthorpe "Manual Worker" note 3.

6 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence" p 139.

7 Lockwood "New Working Class" p 256.

8 Lockwood Blackcoated Worker p 132. Again Lockwood goes on to content himself with description: "however this may be, it is tolerably clear that at the present time invidious comparisons of status across the manual/non-manual divide continue to exacerbate whatever sense of class seperation is already there."

9 Beynon and Nichols "Modern British Sociology" p 23.

10 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 32-47.

11 Ibid p 34.

12 For the reference to 'chronic labour shortage' see ibid p 45. The interplay between this and corporate recruitment strategies has particularly been addressed by Margaret Grieco "The Shaping of a Work Force: a Critique of the Affluent Worker Study" International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy 1981, pp 62-88. She emphasises how the characterisation of full employment substituted for any extensive exploration of the interplay of recruitment strategies and job choice processes in the Luton study. She documents Vauxhall's search for labour in peripheral areas characterised by employment insecurity and low unionisation, and thus argues that Goldthorpe et al (a) provide a miss-specification of the labour market and employer strategy parameters of the Luton sample; (b) fail to recognise employer recruitment strategies which undermine the neo-classical conception of worker choice in the labour market; and (c) develop inappropriate contrasts between the norms and orientations characteristic of communities of origin ('traditional') and destination ('instrumental'). Grieco's argument and evidence will be considered further in the next chapter.

13 The earlier paper was Lockwood and Goldthorpe "Manual Workers" esp. pp 11-17, where the discussion of production is much more positively formulated than in Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 39-43. This treatment of technology is taken up again in chapter 3, below.

14 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 52-53.

15 Ibid p 53.

16 Ibid p 58.

17 Ibid pp 58 and 62; Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour Cambridge 1968, p 187, table A2, and note that the wage structures have to be inferred from the comment on page 7 that only the

top third of process workers and machinists met the criteria for inclusion in the sample in wage terms.

18 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 58-59.

19 Ibid p 58.

20 MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Study" p 247.

21 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker quoted on p 60.

22 Ibid p 60.

23 Goldthorpe et al Industrial Attitudes p 128, table 59 on promotion, and p 37.

24 For the limited promotion opportunities of the clerks see ibid p 37. For the previous white-collar experience of the manual sample see ibid p 32, table 16; and note that within the Goldthorpe and Lockwood conceptualisation such experience must figure within the structure of labour market choice and trade-off for these workers, though it may well be that it indicates relatively youthful casual employment more than anything else.

25 One aspect of this has been pinpointed in Grieco "Shaping a work force".

26 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 82. It is instructive to compare the following comment by Lockwood in Blackcoated Worker: "'propertylessness' produced a fairly consistent pattern of life chances for the manual wage-earning class. A lack of sustained bargaining power, job insecurity, and relative social immobility, have, to a greater or lesser degree, been characteristic of those who depended for their livelihood on the sale of their labour power...At the same time there have always been marked differences within the working-class market situation itself, differences which belie the homogeneity of position and interest which the term 'proletariat' connotes." pp 202-203.

27 See Chas Critcher "Sociology, cultural studies and the post-war working class" in John Clarke et al (eds) Working Class Culture London 1979, esp. p 33 for a parallel observation of the role of a 'skeletal marxism' in the Affluent Worker study.

28 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence" pp 144 and 148.

29 Ibid p 147, final paragraph.

30 Ibid pp 147-148 and 152-155.

31 Ibid p 142.

32 Ibid.

33 This discussion of what is implied by 'phenotypical' and 'genotypical' draws on brief comments on exigencies around pages 102-108 in Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker, and on the comments in Jennifer Platt "Some Problems in Measuring the Jointness of Conjugal Role-relationships" Sociology 3, 1969. See also Frederick Barth Models of Social Organisation London 1966, for what I take to be a comparable argument, developed as a systematic account.

34 Platt "Some Problems" p 295.

35 Ibid p 294 (my emphasis on "in the short run").

36 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence" p 142, and Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 158.

37 David Lockwood "Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society" Sociological Review 14, 1966.

38 Ibid. The major critique was R.L. Davis and Jim Cousins "The 'New Working Class' and the Old" in Martin Bulmer (ed) Working-Class Images of Society;

see also other articles in the Bulmer collection, together with Gareth Stedman Jones "Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics in London, 1870-1900" Journal of Social History 7, 1974.

39 Goldthorpe et al Affluence p 34.

40 Ibid p 33.

41 Ibid pp 40-41.

42 Ibid pp 190-195, considered later.

43 Ibid p 107.

44 Ibid p 108.

45 Ibid p 108, and the whole discussion in pp 103-108.

46 Ibid p 109.

47 Ibid p 93.

48 Ibid, first quote p 92, second p 105, data table 7 p 88.

49 Ibid p 98, ftnt 2 acknowledges this.

50 Ibid pp 94-95

51 Ibid p 110, note.

52 Ibid pp 109-110 and p 113.

53 Ibid pp 109-110 for data.

54 Gavin MacKenzie The Aristocracy of Labor Cambridge 1973 p 15 .

55 Ibid pp 153-154.

56 It is difficult to see in MacKenzie's study any substantial difference of focus from that implied by 'market situation': at most there is a brief discussion of some concomitants of such market situations, but no developed discussion of the immediate production process or production relations more generally.

57 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Not So Bourgeois" p 19.

58 Paul James Kemeny "The Affluent Worker Project: Some Criticisms and a Derivative Study" Sociological Review 20, 1972.

59 Critiques of the discussion of social imagery include H.F. Moorhouse "Attitudes to Class and Class Relationships in Britain" Sociology 1976; Peter Hiller "The Nature and Social Location of Everyday Conceptions of Class" Sociology 9 1975; Beynon and Nichols "Modern British Sociology"; and much of the literature in Bulmer (ed) Working-class Images. I will return to the positive arguments of some of these authors in chapter 4.

60 MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Project"; J.M. Cousins "Some Problems in the Concept of the 'Proletariat'" Mens en Maatschappij 46 1971.

61 MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Project" p 244.

62 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker, exclusions noted on pp 118 and 121; Moorhouse "Attitudes", notes the earlier exclusion in note 41 of Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence".

63 See esp. Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 118-119; this is discussed further below.

64 Ibid p 123, and see also the discussion of aspirations for children on pp 132-134, and promotion data from Goldthorpe et al Industrial Attitudes p 128.

65 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 126.

66 Ibid p 130; p 130 note 3; p 134.

67 Ibid pp 129 (table 16) and 135 (table 17), and summary at the top of p 136.

68 Ibid, discussion on p 126 and also material mentioned in note 63.

69 Ibid pp 147 and 149, and also the presentation in J.H. Goldthorpe "L'image des classes chez les travailleurs manuels aisés" Revue Francaise de Sociologie 11 1970.

70 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 154-155.

71 See for example his discussion of the appearance of "freedom, equality, property and Bentham" Karl Marx Capital vol I, Moscow 1954 p 172.

72 Hiller "Everyday Conceptions" p 7.

73 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 151-152.

74 Ibid p 71.

75 Jennifer Platt "Variations in Answers to Different Questions on Perceptions of Class" Sociological Review 19 1971 p 416.

76 John Westergaard "The Rediscovery of the Cash Nexus" in Ralph Milliband and John Saville (eds) Socialist Register 1970.

77 especially Moorhouse "Attitudes" and Nichols and Beynon "Modern British Sociology".

78 Westergaard "Cash Nexus" p 129.

79 Ibid p 133.

80 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 156.

81 Westergaard "Cash Nexus" pp 120-121 and 132-133 esp.

82 Beynon and Nichols "Modern British Sociology".

83 Ibid pp 14-15.

84 Ibid p 7.

85 Moorhouse "Attitudes" p 474.

86 Norman Dennis et al Coal Is Our Life London 1956 p 36 and see also the related discussion on pp 32-37.

87 Moorhouse "Attitudes" p 474.

88 Ibid pp 490 and 492.

89 Ibid p 492.

90 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence" p 154.

91 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Not So Bourgeois" p 19.

92 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 147 note.

93 Ibid p 146 note.

94 Platt "Variations in Answers" p 414 table II.

95 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker: Political Attitudes and Behaviour Cambridge 1968 p 26.

96 MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Study".

97 Kemeny "Affluent Worker Project" p 372.

98 MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Study" p 247.

99 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence" p 138.

100 Cousins "Some Problems" pp 202-203.

101 Ralf Dahrendorf Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society London 1959, pp 280-289 esp.

102 Jones "Max Weber" pp 752-754.

103 See Goldthorpe et al Industrial Attitudes p 41, ftnt 2: "the existence of an occupational community may itself lead to further limitations on economic rationality, as, for example, where the prevalence of a traditional standard of living leads to the amount of labour offered by a labour force being likely to decline once some critical level of pay is attained".

104 This is an issue taken up especially by Davis and Cousins "New Working Class and Old" in connection with a critique of the ideal-type of the traditional worker.

105 Beynon and Nichols "Modern British Sociology" p 4.

106 For one indication of the political concerns of Weber see Wolfgang J. Mommsen The Age of Bureaucracy Oxford 1974.

107 Mark Abrams and Richard Rose with Rita Hinden Must Labour Lose? Harmondsworth 1960.

108 Lockwood "New Working Class" p 259.

109 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence" p 156; Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 187-195.

110 A glipse of the interplay between Labourist politics and the professionalisation of British sociology, within which this aspect of the Affluent Worker study can be clearly located, is provided by A.H. Halsey "Provincials and Professionals: the British Post-war Sociologists" European Journal of Sociology 23, 1982. He reports a comment by Raymond Aron: 'The trouble is that British sociology is essentially an attempt to make intellectual sense of the political problems of the Labour Party', but adds "for them academic sociology was an alternative to ... political life", pp 165 and 170.

111 Beynon and Nichols "Modern British Sociology" pp 21-22.

112 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 15-21 for this argument.

113 Ibid pp 179-187 for this critique.

114 Ibid p 21.

115 Ibid p 3.

116 Frederick Engels The Condition of the Working Class in England Preface to the first English edition, London 1969, p 29. It is notable that Engels developed an argument which was quite distinctive in comparison with Lenin's later version of the labour aristocracy thesis, but it is not my purpose here to defend any variant of that thesis. For further discussions of these variants see H.F. Moorhouse "The Marxist Theory of the Labour Aristocracy" Social History 3, 1978, and Robert Gray The Aristocracy of Labour in Nineteenth-century Britain London 1981, both of whom note that the post-war debate has involved contributions which accord either market situations or the immediate production process primacy.

117 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 181.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid p 182.

120 Ibid p 64, my emphasis on 'for any skill level', the phrase which, in context, clearly stresses the constrained character of choice.

121 Karl Marx Capital I p 579. Since the beginning of the 1970/s other work has become available in translation which pursues this theme: for examples see Karl Marx Grundrisse Harmondsworth 1973 pp 286-287, and "Results of the Immediate Process of Production", an appendix to the Penguin edition of Capital I, Harmondsworth 1976 pp 1032-1033.

122 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 183.

123 See for example the critique of Herbert Marcuse in Peter Sedgwick "Natural Science and Human Theory" in Socialist Register 1966, esp. pp 163-173.

124 See for example Georg Lukacs "Technology and Social Relations" New Left Review 39, 1966.

125 In particular in the work of Pierre Naville, quoted by Goldthorpe et al and published in the late 1950/s and early 1960/s. See Pierre Naville "The Structure of Employment and Automation" International Social Science Bulletin 10 1958 and L'automation et le Travail Humain Paris 1961 in comparison with Serge Mallet "Socialism and the New Working Class" International Socialist Journal 2 1965 and The New Working Class Nottingham 1975; and also the comments by Pierre Rolle in International Socialist Journal 2, and the discussion of both Mallet and Naville in Duncan Gallie In Search of the New Working Class Cambridge 1978 pp 16-29.

126 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence" p 156.

127 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 167-170, and p 153; and see the more detailed discussion in Goldthorpe et al Industrial Attitudes chapters 5 and 6, which is considered further in the next chapter.

128 Ibid pp 167-168.

129 Ibid pp 172-179; quotation from p 177; and see the related discussion in Goldthorpe et al Political Attitudes.

130 Ibid pp 178-179.

131 Ibid.

132 Ibid note 1.

133 Goldthorpe and Lockwood "Affluence" p 152, quoted in Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 27.

134 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 191-192.

135 Westergaard "Cash Nexus" p 126; and also Beynon and Nichols "Modern British Sociology" pp 19-20.

136 For an indication of the role of Labourism since the war, and some discussion of implications for consciousness see Leo Panitch Social Democracy and Industrial Militancy Cambridge 1976, and "Socialists and the Labour Party: a Reappraisal" Socialist Register 1979.

137 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 187-195.

138 Ibid p 189.

139 Westergaard "Cash Nexus" p 113 footnote.

140 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 189.

141 Ibid p 193.

142 Ibid pp 193-194.

143 Ibid p 194, footnote; and Goldthorpe et al Industrial Attitudes p 109.

144 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 192.

145 Westergaard "Cash-Nexus" p 126, compared with Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 191.

146 Westergaard "Cash Nexus" p 134.

147 Lockwood "Sources of Variation in Working-class Images of Society" in Martin Bulmer (ed) Working-Class Images of Society p 21 and footnote 23.

148 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 190.

149 See the earlier discussion of Westergaard, Moorhouse and Beynon and Nichols.

150 Abrams and Rose with Hinden Must Labour Lose? part III.

151 Ibid pp 107, 108 and 120-121.

152 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 17-18.

153 Ibid p 20 ftnt 2. The works cited are Perry Anderson "Problems of Socialist Strategy" and John Westergaard "The Withering Away of Class" both in Perry Anderson and Robin Blackburn (eds) Towards Socialism London 1965.

154 Beynon and Nichols "Modern British Sociology" p 20 for the character of shop-floor organisation; and Beynon and Nichols, together with Westergaard "Cash Nexus" and Moorhouse "Attitudes", for the wider critique discussed above.

155 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 15; the reference is to Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy Monopoly Capital New York and London 1966.

156 Among critiques of Baran and Sweezy see James O'Connor "Monopoly Capital" New Left Review 40, 1966; Ernest Mandel Late Capitalism London 1975, esp. chapter 5 and chapter 17; Andrew Gamble and Paul Walton Capitalism in Crisis London 1976, chapter 3; and the discussion in chapter 6 below.

Chapter 3

The Sociology of Work in the 'Affluent Worker' Studies

It may appear as somewhat paradoxical that the Affluent Worker studies, which lacked any developed conception of employment relations and the social organisation of production, should have occasioned an intense debate about rival approaches to the sociology of industry. What is certainly true is that the form taken by that debate was marked by the inadequate treatment of class relations in the work of Goldthorpe and his colleagues. In this chapter I intend to trace the ways in which the debate was so structured by the approach adopted by Goldthorpe and Lockwood. However, before the various arguments initiated by these authors and by their critics can be seen in such perspective, it is necessary to return to the question of the manner in which work relations were actually considered at the start of the original research project.

Despite the varying attention accorded to the 'work situation' in the initial conceptual critiques of embourgeoisement which preceeded the Luton study, Goldthorpe and Lockwood clearly retained a concern to examine that aspect of the economic position of the affluent worker. Any deficiencies in their approach concern the manner in which they pursued this issue rather than any simple absence of consideration. As MacKenzie points out, they clearly adopt the main descriptive elements of 'technical implications' analyses. They form the bases of the discussion of the features of work situations relevant to the study of the class situation of the affluent worker.[1] This is spelt out most explicitly in an unpublished paper which prefigured the 1963 article. This conference paper considered work situations under two headings, plant size and production system, and under the latter gave a straight summary of technical implications arguments. Thus:

> "with mass production, management exercises strict control over workers and often exerts strong pressure upon them in order to maintain the efficiency of the technical system; but with process production efficiency no longer depends to the same extent on worker effort, nor, thus, on managerial activity of the kind in question".[2]

The implications of such arguments for the diagnosis of changes in class formation were then spelt out in the following terms:

> "the social structure of unit and process production is probably less conducive to the development of a dichotomous social imagery and collectivist social ethic than is the work milieu of mass production" while "so far as work relations are concerned ... we would doubt that favourable social conditions for <u>embourgeoisement</u> exist where workers are employed in large scale plants using large batch or mass production systems".[3]

And finally this provided the basis for a specification of what would constitute a strategic research site providing a 'critical' test of the embourgeoisement thesis:

> "we would prefer a group of workers earning incomes comparable with those of lower non-manual occupations, employed in a small or moderate sized process - (or unit) - production plant, and living in a relatively new and socially heterogeneous community (where extended kinship ties are thus likely to be absent.)"[4]

The most striking thing about this sequence of argument, apart from its commitment to a technological implications analysis of production systems, is the divergence between its specification of a critical case and that finally adopted by the Luton team. In the event, of course, Goldthorpe et al. studied workers in three large enterprises, only one of which was a process production plant. However, this shift of focus left the application of the technical implications approach intact, at least for the time being. It would appear that the problems of non-association of the various features of the critical case, and presumably exigencies of convenient research, encouraged a re-specification of the appropriate research setting. This involved the disappearance of plant size as an analytical focus, and a modified rationale for the concern with production systems. This rationale (or rationalisation) was outlined later in the following terms:

> "this reflected our concern to incorporate into our research a full investigation of the industrial lives of the workers we studied. Current discussion of the <u>embourgeoisement</u> issue revealed a very one-sided emphasis on the worker as consumer rather than producer. However, we did not believe that in this respect we had enough information to follow through the strategy of the critical case to the point of concentrating on one particular kind of technological environment as being probably that most conducive to <u>embourgeoisement</u>. Rather, we aimed at covering a number of the most important general types of industrial technology. In this we

were guided by the classification of production systems in Joan Woodward's Management and Technology".[5] Thus Goldthorpe et al. came to adopt a more agnostic position in relation to the implications of different production systems for class formation; a position which may have arisen from a combination of research exigencies and growing doubts about the implications of process production in the light of published studies, but which is explicitly justified in terms of the deficiencies of British variants of the embourgeoisement thesis.[6] Thus the more agnostic stance justifies the inclusion of Vauxhall and Skefko in the study, but also justifies the adoption of the Woodward typology as a basis for making good the absence of a concern with production in the earlier diagnoses of the affluent worker.

It is important, then, to emphasise that the adoption of these ideas about production systems follows naturally, not simply from the pre-eminence which they were gaining in industrial sociology by the early 1960s, but also -- and perhaps more significantly -- from concerns which they shared with the Cambridge approach to class analysis. What the various statements of a 'technical implications' approach developed in the late 1950s and early 1960's had in common, though it was articulated within various analytical frameworks, was a preoccupation with explanations of variations in the character of work experience in terms of the immediate socio-technical contexts of specific sorts of work rather than analysis of the broader conditions of employment. Woodward embraced such an emphasis under the rubric of 'situational constraints' and a critique of the 'one best way', but this preoccupation was given a more adequate sociological expression in Blauner's Alienation and Freedom.[7] (Thus it is not surprising that though the latter was not published until 1964 it was rapidly assimilated to the catalogue of inspirations of this aspect of the Luton study).[8]

This concern with variations in experience and perspectives related to specific socio-technical circumstances has an obvious affinity with Lockwood's project of developing a typology of rounds of immediate experience and corresponding forms of consciousness, sketched out in his article on the 'new working class' and completed in "Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society"; and it was clearly in these terms that the technology typology was adopted in the 1962 conference paper which was the precursor to the Affluent Worker project itself.[9] What I am concerned to do in the first section of this chapter is to trace the role that this technology typology plays in the project,

and the terms in which it is eventually repudiated. This will lead into a more rounded discussion of the strengths and weakness of the monograph on the Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour, one which considers the relationship between this debate about technology and the Goldthorpian analysis of the class situation and consciousness of such workers, and thus returns to some of the themes of the previous chapter.[10] Finally I will consider an early critique of the Luton study which focusses upon the character of industrial conflict at Vauxhall, together with other analyses of industrial relations in the car plant.

Goldthorpe's Engagement with Technical Implications Analyses

The concern with the analysis of variations of work experience within the 'technical implications' paradigm had been a focus of Goldthorpe's work before the Affluent Worker study, in one of the papers which MacKenzie cites as offering "a clear and unambiguous view of the nature of social class and class structure."[11] This paper, a study of patterns of supervisor-worker conflict in the mining industry, thus provides a valuable background to any consideration of the fate of this concern within the Luton research.[12] In it Goldthorpe argued the merits of attention to technology on two grounds. The first argument was that the obvious impact of economic conditions on work experience and industrial conflict, particularly during the inter-war period, had "led to the neglect of the influence, in this respect, of the revolution in mining techniques."[13] This point is analogous to Lockwood's argument that the embourgeoisement theorists reliance on trends of macro-economic change involved neglect of the detailed structures of social organisation within which class attitudes are generated, and it provides the basis for a similar appeal for the study of such detailed structures.

However Goldthorpe did not make very strong claims for the exclusive or dominant determining impact of technology, but complemented his first argument with a severely pragmatic reason for concentrating upon technology.[14] This involved the claim that technique was, much more than either the natural or the economic environments of mining, open to immediate human intervention. As the most tangible resultant of managerial (and to some extent union) decision-making it would presumably be subject to alteration if more satisfactory modes of organisation and technical operation could be conceived. This position allowed

Goldthorpe to justify a preoccupation with changes in technique in terms of an examination of a previously neglected but practically significant variable, without entering into theoretical controversy about the relative significance, and interrelation between, 'economic' and 'technical' parameters of work situations. Thus, though his discussion of the working of 'longwall' and 'fully mechanised' methods of production in circumstances of labour surplus before the war and of labour shortage after the war -- in the latter context some deputies complained of "management's 'policy of appeasement' " -- invites some discussion of these interrelations, no such discussion results.[15] As a consequence the theoretical differences which might underlie the similar descriptive accounts offered by Goldthorpe and other 'technical implications' theorists are hardly confronted. In particular the differences between Goldthorpe and Trist et al remain implicit. The latter authors also remark upon the manner in which "disturbances associated with industrial struggle and economic depression have tended to mask those associated with the coal-getting method", but though they share with Goldthorpe an interest in the manipulation of the proximate environment of workers, their notion of 'displacement' implies that production technology provides the real basis for conflict while economic grievances are spurious. Goldthorpe on the other hand registers the existence of "at least an irreducible minimum of conflict arising out of the management-worker dichotomy", though this does not prompt any attempt to integrate his analysis of technology within a broader consideration of the social relations of production and nor does it prompt a critique of the Tavistock approach.[16]

In attempting to trace the relationships between the variant of a 'technical implications' approach elaborated by Goldthorpe, other versions of such analyses which had come to prominence in the early 1960's, and the manner in which they were incorporated into the Affluent Worker project, the dominant impression is one in line with the above comments: namely, the utilisation of technical implications typologies as inventories of coherent clusters of features of immediate work experience but with minimal theoretical or conceptual appraisal of these typologies. One important reason for this was, presumably, the rather a-theoretical and empiricist character of the most obvious exemplars of 'technical implications' analysis. After all, the more extensive analytical statements of both Woodward and the Tavistock authors, as well as Blauner, were published after the Luton

research was under way.[17] However, another must have been the character of the authors' own analytical concerns, focussed on the characterisation of the concomitants within production of specific market situations but without any systematic concern with the social relations of production. Thus their central concern with the descriptive specification of variations in immediate work circumstances, and their inattention to the manner in which specific aspects of work situations are lodged within and conditioned by the pattern of development of employment relations must have <u>facilitated</u> their adoption of technological categories as the bases of comparison of work situations without it <u>provoking</u> theoretical arguments. A final point to be made here is that though, in the context of the Luton research, Goldthorpe's pragmatic argument for preoccupation with technology must presumably have been replaced by some variant of Lockwood's interpretation and extension of Bott's concern with the round of immediate experience, these matters do not receive any attention or discussion in published work. This uncritical assimilation of 'technicist' arguments, an assimilation acknowledged by Goldthorpe in a later reflection that "although we held some theoretical doubts about the role of 'technology' as a category in sociological explanation, we did nonetheless expect to find consistent variation in work attitudes and behaviour among the men in our sample, associated with differing 'socio-technical systems' in which they were involved", has to be set alongside, and contrasted with, the detailed conceptual critique which these authors had mounted against the notion of embourgeoisement.[18] Thus the technical implications typology of production systems was incorporated into the conceptual framework and research design of the neo-weberian class analysis elaborated by Goldthorpe and Lockwood. As will be seen below, the uncritical adumbration of work situations in technicist terms at the beginning of the research project, coupled with the analytical refinement devoted to the discussion of non-work social relations, serve as key parameters within which the critical arguments about the sociology of work, developed during the course of the research, necessarily operated. The repudiation of technical implications led back to a market-focussed account of class situations rather than to any real consideration of the social character of fundamental production relations.

Turning then to the Luton research, the reasoning outlined earlier served as the basis for the incorporation of a range of

production technology within the research design. However, in other respects the pursuit of a critical test case introduced a narrower specification of the sort of industrial environment which deserved close examination, most obviously in regard to 'high-wage' patterns, job security and 'peaceful' industrial relations. But as has been suggested in the previous chapter, these features tended to be treated alongside technology as discrete 'variables', so that, despite some discussion of the interrelationship of wages and job security or wages and hazardous work, no real attempt was made to situate this specific constellation of features of employment as a particular, coherent variant of relations between capital and labour and thus to locate it theoretically in an alternative analysis to that implied by the conventional theorists of affluence.[19]

These considerations constitute an essential background to any assessment of the next and most discussed phase of the Affluent Worker project; that concerned directly with the adequacy of different approaches to the sociology of industry. As is well known, this topic was addressed in the first research reports from the project, which developed a sharp theoretical critique of technical implications perspectives in the context of empirical evidence about the industrial attitudes and behaviour of affluent workers.[20] Goldthorpe has since emphasised the research 'context of discovery' from which these publications arose: unexpected research findings transformed technical implications accounts from resources in the delineation of the social context of instrumental collectivism into targets for criticisms fueled by their apparent failure adequately to explain the discovered patterns of work experience and conduct.[21] It is this preoccupation, with the elaboration of criticisms of established orthodoxies in industrial sociology, which, according to the authors, makes these initial publications "by-products of an enquiry ith a different focus .... dealing with issues somewhat apart from the main report."[22] However this self-description should not be taken at face value. It remains important to locate these essays within the development of the project as a whole, both because the character of this 'diversion' owes much to the terms of the initial conceptualisation of the broader issue of class analysis, and because the reorientations involved ramify through the overall account which these authors offer of the location of the affluent worker in the class structure. These relationships and implications can only be established by a re-examination

of the specific arguments of the 'industrial' publications, while this will allow consideration of the significance of the various criticisms which have been levelled at those arguments. The basic theme which I will seek to develop is that the initial conceptualisation of 'class situation' in terms of market situation and its technical concomitants set the terms of the ensuing argument. On the basis of this starting point the focus of debate became the question of the relative significance of technical concomitants on the one hand and orientations, expressed through market choice, on the other. Thus the neo-weberian perspective adopted by Goldthorpe and his colleagues defined the terms of debate in a manner which excluded any adequate consideration of the social organisation of production and the conflict between capital and labour within production.

The first presentations of the critique of technologism developed by the Cambridge team focussed specifically upon analyses of the perspectives and conduct of assembly-line workers in the motor industry, and deployed evidence from the Vauxhall study to challenge those analyses. This material provided Goldthorpe with an opportunity to rehearse his arguments on the most dramatic terrain and for this reason I will focus my discussion of the logic of his argument upon these initial articles; this will be followed by a rather briefer consideration of his reiteration and variation of his theme in the later 'industrial' Affluent Worker monograph.

Before turning to an examination of the underlying argument, however, it is necessary to comment upon the academic context of Goldthorpe's intervention, to follow through the issue of the professionalisation of sociology touched on in the last chapter. As will be seen below, Goldthorpe deployed his material to challenge the adequacy of two influential traditions in industrial studies: 'human relations' theory and technical implications analyses. Each of these had served to define and legitimate a specifically social analysis of work (with a certain ambiguity of sociological versus social psychological focus) alongside economic and industrial relations and psychophysiological studies; but major parts of each were explicitly developed as guides to management and were concerned especially with the motivation and control of workers and efficient organisational designs.[23] Thus Goldthorpe's critique of both involved not only an 'internal' academic debate but also the demarcation of a specific academic territory: that of a professional 'value-free' sociology over against the claims of more committed 'applied' practitioners. While at

one point Goldthorpe himself proposed to spell out the "considerable practical significance" of his argument "for aspects of both management and union policy" this does not appear to have been done in any specific or detailed way, for it was this intervention on the specifically academic terrain rather than beyond which was the crucial preoccupation of the Cambridge team.[24] In this context Goldthorpe's critiques of 'human relations' and 'technical implications' approaches were not of equivalent significance, since the former had been both criticised and, to some extent, assimilated by the latter by the mid 1960s. Thus it is appropriate to both the priorities of Goldthorpe's critique and the focus of my own argument for me to concentrate my attention on his arguments directed at the 'technical implications' theorists, while giving only passing attention to his discussion of 'human relations'.

I will begin with a short overview of the arguments contained in the articles written about the Vauxhall assembly-line workers. Goldthorpe deployed evidence about their attitudes and conduct to contest a central claim of the technical implication analyses; namely that deprivations inherent in the technical organisation of assembly-line work generated dissatisfactions which coloured the whole pattern of management-worker relations, and so produced a distinctively high level of covert and overt conflict. The pattern exhibited at Vauxhall deviated from this model because experienced work deprivations were not associated with strongly and generally antagonistic relationships between employer and workers. In terms of both attitudes and specific forms of conduct (strikes, labour turnover) the evidence pointed to a pattern of relatively peaceful coexistence; though of course the very process of designating a research site in terms which included 'harmonious industrial relations' must have diminished the surprise of such findings. As Goldthorpe himself acknowledged in passing, the puzzle which he confronted in his 'deviant case' was as much one of reconciliation of different aspects of the initial specification of the research, in particular assembly-line and mass production together with 'industrial peace', as it was one of confronting unexpected findings in a "context of discovery"![25]

Goldthorpe advanced two related arguments to explain the apparently distinctive Vauxhall findings, one directed at the nub of the 'technical implications' position and the other at a linked 'human relations' assumption. Looking first at the latter, this involved the expectation that technical obstacles to the formation of cohesive work groups would be experienced as obstacles to valued sociability, while the sociable

initiatives of foremen might, in this context, mitigate antagonisms by providing a focus of group identity. Against this quasi-human-relations position Goldthorpe suggested that such technical obstacles to group formation, found at both Vauxhalls and the research locations studied from a technicist perspective, did not generate general dissatisfactions at the former because they did not occasion even specific dissatisfactions This was because Vauxhall workers appeared eminently unconcerned with sociable interaction in work. This argument was given a specific theoretical reference point by linking it to Dubin's critique of 'human relations' theory, a critique based on the argument that workers do not generally conceive of work as a 'central life interest'.[26]

Before commenting on this attack on human relations assumptions within technicism it is necessary to outline the second, more crucial, element of Goldthorpe's case. This was addressed directly to the central postulate of the technical implications approach, that the immediate conditions and imperatives of different production technologies constitute the primary experiences which promote distinctive modes of employee response to their employers and employment. In the case of assembly-line workers the technicist argument, given exemplary expression by Blauner, though with qualifications unremarked by Goldthorpe, emphasised that the tedium, tension and restriction of initiative entailed by fragmented, standardised and paced track-work frustrated workers' concerns with control and creativity in work; enforced a thoroughly pay-oriented basis of work commitment; and thus stimulated a rich variety of manifestations of industrial conflict — ranging from high labour turnover, through sabotage and covert counter-control strategies, to wildcat strikes and aggressive organised unionism.[27] Goldthorpe's critique of this position does not contest the existence among assembly-line workers of some concern with creativity and control, for he stresses that Vauxhall assemblers experienced real deprivations on the track and also compared jobs within the plant in terms of work pressure and job interest. Rather, this pattern is juxtaposed with evidence of lowish labour turnover and a record of peaceful industrial relations, and the argument is advanced that Vauxhall workers saw work deprivations primarily as costs incurred as a consequence of, and in that sense in return for, high wages. Such workers might then be expected to be particularly alive to the gains rather than the costs of their employment situation, and to subordinate their pursuit of job interest and work autonomy to a dominant concern with secure 'high wages'. The fundamental evidence adduced for this

distinctive interpretation of the meaning and implications of instrumentalism among Vauxhall workers was data on job histories and on reasons for job preferences. Together interview evidence on these two topics supported the view that the Vauxhall assemblers had taken such jobs "because of a desire, and an eventual decision, on their part to give priority to high-level economic returns from work at the expense, if necessary, of satisfactions of an intrinsic kind".[28] This characterisation of the logic of instrumentalism served, in turn, to illustrate and support the major theoretical contention advanced by Goldthorpe, namely that orientations towards employment must be regarded as "independent variables relative to the work situation, rather than ... simply as a product of that situation."[29] This constituted the critical shift noted above, from the endorsement of a technicist characterisation of the logic of immediate work experience to the counter-emphasis of independent orientations mediated through labour market choice, via the discovery (or at least further exploration) of a lack of fit between technology and apparent job preferences.

Having outlined the structure of Goldthorpe's argument it is now necessary to reconsider its strengths and weaknesses. I will begin by considering his subsidiary argument, about workers' unconcern with work group sociability, because this will allow a consideration of the relationship between Goldthorpe's position and that advanced by Dubin. This will serve to clarify the character of Goldthorpe's argument and to introduce some of the criticisms levelled against him, and in particular that of Mann who criticises Goldthorpe by implication through a critique of Dubin.[30] As Mann has pointed out there are important flaws in Dubin's notion of 'central life interests' and in the interpretation of the questions asked in order to 'operationalise' it. The first problem is that he translates reports of present patterns of interest and fulfilment into assessments of the preferred arenas for the pursuit of interest and fulfilment. Another difficulty is that he assimilates two rather different claims: the more modest one that his data indicated the low present saliency of inter-personal sociability at work, the basis for a polemic against vulgar human relations assumptions about the pursuit of 'group belongingness' in work; and the grander claim that it demonstrates a general disinterest among workers in contesting depriving aspects of their work experience.[31] In relation to this latter difficulty Goldthorpe clearly had the more modest interpretation in mind in his published discussion of the worker and the work group, and his data are fairly adequate to support that position. In respect of the stronger claim he explicitly recognised that

workers remain conscious of such features of their work experience as monotony and pace as <u>deprivations</u>. Thus Goldthorpe, at any rate, aimed the strong argument only at claims about sociability, while his discussion of work derivations was differently grounded, a point made quite explicit in a footnote to his initial unpublished paper:

> "the implication here is that the need for 'social' satisfactions in work is less exigent than the need for satisfactions deriving directly from the performance of work-tasks...Our data indicate that in the latter respect the men in our sample <u>do</u> experience deprivation in their work, <u>in spite of</u> their definition of this as essentially instrumental. The difference may be explained by the fact that there are several alternative milieux ... within which the worker can develop inherently rewarding social relationships, but that opportunities for satisfying his creative needs are less readily available outside of work .... Also, of course, it is difficult to 'define away' the more physiological stresses and strains of assembly jobs."[32]

So far as Mann's major objection to Dubin's argument is concerned -- that he was merely documenting expectations operating within an established institutional framework of constraints, rather than detecting those underlying concerns which may contradict that framework -- Goldthorpe's position must be distinguished from that of Dubin, both in respect to his recognition of 'real deprivations' and because of the rather distinctive evidence and conceptualisation which he brought to bear on the issue of constraint and choice. As will be seen, this does not banish all ambiguities from Goldthorpe's discussion; but it does mean that Mann's critique of Dubin, while posing some questions about the character of Goldthorpe's treatment which are discussed below, cannot serve as an adequate substitute for a direct examination of his own major argument. Before turning to this, however, two final comments on his treatment of 'the worker and the work group' are required.

Firstly it should be noted that the literature on assembly-line workers had not been totally dominated by neo-human relations assumptions even before the Luton project. Thus, while Walker, Guest, Woodward and Blauner all adopted such assumptions, Chinoy, on the other hand, was critical of this view, emphasising that foremen had little room for manoeuvre in this respect, while workers' concerns were not properly construed in terms of the pursuit of sociability.[33] In this and other respects Chinoy's <u>Automobile Workers and the American Dream</u> cannot be assimilated to the technical implications paradigm. The second comment concerns the tendency of Goldthorpe to equate the assumptions of human relations theorists and

"militant left-wing commentators" concerning cohesive work-groups: it might be questioned how far communal sociability rather than "a fairly superficial camaraderie" is a prerequisite of collective action, especially in view of the evidence of a fair degree of participation in workplace union affairs.[34]

The distinctive features of Goldthorpe's own treatment of the issue of 'real deprivations' are clearly evident in the manner in which he developed his main argument about technical implications and orientations. There he developed a coherent interpretation of (i) the different grounds cited for job choice <u>within</u> Vauxhall compared with the decision to <u>come to and remain with</u> the firm; (ii) the disjunction between experienced work deprivations and positive appraisals of management; and (iii) job history evidence that many workers had previous experience of more intrinsically rewarding jobs. This interpretation focussed on the application, by workers, of a calculus of priorities which, mediated through the labour market, informed choices between a range of alternative mixes of wage levels and work situations. In substantive terms this interpretation focussed on the evidence that these now-affluent workers had chosen Vauxhall and rejected less onerous work tasks because of their "tremendous drive for economic advancement."[35] It is on this basis that Goldthorpe saw their experience of work deprivations as real but of limited consequence: work relations are not 'mandatory but unimportant' as Dubin implies, rather they are costs incurred in the pursuit of a valued bargain. Work deprivations are not defined away, but they are seen as necessary costs; or in the terms introduced to the debate by Daniel, the workers are not 'anaesthetised' but rather 'grin and bear it' because they remain alive to the calculations on which their commitment is based.[36] Not only does this argument expose the different emphases of Dubin and Goldthorpe; it also provided a basis on which Goldthorpe could differentiate his analysis from the accounts of instrumentalism among assembly-line workers offered by Guest, Chinoy and Blauner. For these authors, instrumentalism develops in a process of adaptation or reconciliation to a constraining reality of limited possibilities, for in Chinoy's words "if these men had ever hoped for work which would engage their interests and abilities they were soon forced, in most instances, to give up such desires."[37] Such an adaptation would be a partial and problematical response in comparison with the consistent prior calculative commitment deduced by Goldthorpe, and was thus thought to have more uncertain and conflict-prone industrial relations implications. Goldthorpe's account, in comparison, could claim as its major achievement

its ability to explain the dominant feature of the Vauxhall assemblers' perspectives on industrial relations, namely that their "sense of being in contention with their employer appeared to be largely confined to... matters immediately relevant to the effort bargain"[38]; though again the meaning of such confinement will be seen to be less clear than Goldthorpe himself implies.

The novelty of Goldthorpe's argument - the 'deviant' explanation of 'deviant' findings - revolved, then, around a conception of job choice and the operation of the labour market on the one hand and a characterisation of the distinctively narrow focus of bargaining concerns on the other. The match between these two crucial features of the analysis lends credence and coherence to the account of the attitudes and behaviour of Vauxhall workers, though as Goldthorpe emphasises labour market choice has to be inferred from relatively limited data. However, it is also important to stress the role of another element of the analysis, which forms an essential background to the account of the character and implications of job choice. This is the account of the varied job niches among which workers may choose, which relies primarily upon the understanding of work situations as varied constellations of technical circumstances, discussed earlier in this chapter. Despite the sharp polemic against those technical implications theorists who inspired that understanding, this remains the third, though less prominently displayed, fundamental feature of Goldthorpe's analysis. I will now examine each of these features in turn, to provide a cumulative critique of the 'orientations to work' analysis.

Job Choice and the Labour Market

The attention given to job choice in the labour market represents the major innovation among the elements of Goldthorpe's approach, both in relation to debate within industrial sociology and in regard to the broader conceptualisation of the class location of the affluent worker, discussed in the previous chapter. This innovative feature arose, of course, in a theoretical context which pinpointed market situations as critically important, and in that sense such a neo-weberian approach to class analysis would necessarily address the issue of the labour market location of the affluent worker. On the other hand the academic division of labour between economics and sociology meant there was little precedent for sociological study of labour markets, while the research strategy provided rather indirect indicators of the character of such markets. In this specific sense Goldthorpe's reservations about interpreting evidence in the 'context of

discovery' are particularly pertinent to this topic, where the data is "suggestive not decisive".[39] However, while this may excuse the limitations of the data on labour markets, the central theoretical role of market situations and processes means that it cannot, as Goldthorpe implied, exempt his argument and evidence on this topic from critical scrutiny.

Goldthorpe provided his most explicit statements on the character of job choice and the labour market in his unpublished 1965 conference paper, which was an extended version of the later published article on Vauxhall workers, but the position adopted in the latter paper does not appear to be significantly different, just relatively abbreviated in comparison with its precursor. The crucial arguments were:

> "workers make choices between different kinds of employment available to them, according to their existing wants and aspirations relative to work"...."A majority of our respondents have in fact chosen to abandon employments offering them relatively high intrinsic rewards in favour of employment which will enable them to gain greater extrinsic rewards and specifically higher earnings"...."their present employment is in the main adequate to their work expectations: that is to say, it largely offers them those returns which, at this stage in their lives at least, they believe they can best derive from work. The majority of these men have in effect opted to sacrifice various intrinsic rewards which they might otherwise have gained from work in order to take a job which will enable them to push earnings near to the maximum possible for them. And employment at Vauxhall has given them the opportunity to do this, while offering too, one should add, a reasonable degree of security and the benefits of advanced welfare and personnel policies."[40]

As these excerpts suggest, the emphasis in Goldthorpe's discussion of job choice, both in the conceptualisation of the process and in the related interpretation of data, was upon an assortment process through which some relationship of equivalence was established between workers' priorities and the pattern of satisfactions available from employment. As will be seen, such a model confronts precisely the ambiguities about the issues of constraint and choice which have already been commented upon in relation to the more general class analysis. This emerges even in the stipulation of the conditions under which such assortment might be expected to operate. Thus on one hand Goldthorpe made it clear that this conceptualisation should not be erected into a generalised characterisation of the workings of labour markets and the attendant consequences for industrial

relations, but should be seen as appropriate for specific labour market conditions, in particular situations of 'full employment'. On the other hand, though, Goldthorpe's endorsement of Etzioni's notion of calculative involvement in economic organisations appears to indicate an alternative and rather broader commitment to an assortment/equivalence model under a wider range of labour market conditions.[41] Even if the latter possibility is discounted in favour of the former, more modest, perspective the treatment of choice and constraint remains a problem. Both the focus on full employment as a point of reference, and the emphasis upon the breadth of job experience indicated by the job histories of the Vauxhall workers, underlined the range of job niches among which workers might choose in pursuit of their specific priorities.[42] It was this emphasis on choice - with its implication that workers were able to make conscious and effective decisions to match their priorities to a congruent working environment and terms of employment - which informed Goldthorpe's interpretation of the effectiveness of the 'wage-contract nexus' as a basis for a notably non-antagonistic relation with management. The crucial problem is that this thread of argument loses much of its force when these patterns of choice are explicitly placed in a broader context of constraints. The dependence of his explanation of the apparent narrowness of bargaining concerns upon this emphasis on choice and assortment can be pinpointed more precisely by a consideration of (i) the character of the alternative job niches and (ii) the status of the priorities pursued by workers, as together these are held to generate the relevant labour market processes and outcomes.

In regard to alternative jobs, without explicit attention to the limited terms of choice it is easy to imply that workers confront a range of alternatives among which there are some that closely match their own preferences. Following on from this, if specific preferences (e.g. for high wages) are closely matched by employment conditions, then it is realistic to expect that conflicts will focus upon the further extension of those positive features which attracted workers in the first place, with little positive bargaining attention being devoted to other features of employment. In a number of respects -- the vocabulary of choice, the endorsement of Etzioni's characterisation of compliance, and the unproblematical interpretation of the bargaining preoccupations of Vauxhall assemblers -- Goldthorpe's articles depend upon this mode of interpretation, which hinges on a neo-classical labour market model and which Daniel has diagnosed appropriately as "an emphasis on voluntarism on the part of the

actor and on congruence between the primary goals of the actor and the primary methods of control used by the organisation.[43] The important point in respect of these arguments is that the explicit recognition of limited alternatives would immediately suggest a weaker characterisation of the match between workers' preferences and employment conditions, namely that workers confront some choice between alternatives which differentially relate to their own needs and preferences. Thus some jobs may be more adequate than others from the worker's point of view, and on that basis job choices may be made and upheld without implying any thorough equivalence. The difficulty this poses for Goldthorpe's account is that as the conception of equivalence is relaxed towards a notion of relative attractiveness the explanation of the narrow range of issues ostensibly pursued in bargaining becomes increasingly problematical. There is no intrinsic reason why concerns subordinated in the course of constrained choice should remain subdued.[44]

In the course of the polemics between Daniel and Goldthorpe the latter responded to the charge that he had given one-sided attention to voluntary choice by emphasising that this was not the position he wished to defend:

"while it is true that workers are assumed by social action theorists to have some idea of their priorities in work and to seek to get, or retain, employment accordingly, what is certainly not assumed is that they are invariably successful in this, and that 'congruence' between employee goals and organisational control methods is thus normal. Under certain conditions -- labour shortages across a wide range of jobs, a mobile labour force, good communications networks, etc. -- some approximation to this situation may be found; as, for example, in the case of some groups in our Luton sample. But how far this occurs in any particular case is always an empirical question. Furthermore the point must be, and has been, stressed that under any circumstances workers in different class positions make their choices within different sets of constraints. As we have insisted on throughout the Affluent Worker studies, our Luton findings bring out well the hard dilemma faced by those who have little to offer in the market but their labour power. For them, in contrast with most types of white-collar worker, the choice is typically between work which offers some possibility of variety, autonomy and scope for initiative, and work which affords the highest going rate of economic return."[45]

This passage points up the increased attention given to limited alternatives of job choice in the later monographs, but even so remains unsatisfactory in two critical respects. Firstly there remains a continued disjunction

between the discussion of an approximation towards congruence among 'some groups' [which would include the Vauxhall assemblers], and the emphasis on limited alternatives under 'any circumstances'; a disjunction which is most obvious in the treatment of white-collar work firstly as an available choice which has been renounced in favour of cash returns (this is an implication of the discussion of occupational histories), but secondly as a distinct arena of choice inaccessible to the seller of labour power. It is worth noting at this point that the translation of 'occupational categories' into arenas of job choice is both more critical and more difficult than Goldthorpe appears to recognise. Certainly categories two, three, four and five used in the resumé of job histories would appear to contain quite diverse job conditions, especially when note is taken of the possibly distinctive character of white-collar and intermediate jobs occupied during adolescence rather than later working life, while the range of variation of 'intrinsic' job features confronted by the workers studied is really unknown.[46] Secondly there is no real recognition, in Goldthorpe's response to Daniel, that the explanation he offered for the distinctive bargaining attitudes and actions of Vauxhall workers continued to rest upon allegiance to what Blackburn and Mann have more recently but aptly termed a 'sociological neo-classical view' of the market as an efficient assortment mechanism.[47] The more attention is directed to the considerations outlined in the second part of the paragraph quoted above, the less satisfactory is that explanation. This does not mean that a narrowly cash-oriented bargaining stance becomes inexplicable when the discussion of choice is clearly situated within broader structural constraints, only that an understanding of such perspectives and conduct would involve attention to a range of considerations hardly touched on by Goldthorpe. In the context of recognition of the reality of work deprivations, an appeal to prior, given, orientations to instrumentalism would be insufficient. For an explanation of narrow and benign conflicts between workers and management would then have to be related to the ongoing assessment by workers of the possibilities and penalties of individual or collective pursuit of different bargaining issues. This would involve attention to the ways in which workers' current bargaining objectives were conditioned by the whole configuration of class relations, of which labour markets constitute only one significant element. It should be added here that though Daniel's critique of Goldthorpe does expose the inadequacy of the latter's treatment of the labour market, Daniel's own argument is presented largely as an empirical claim backed by rather diverse theoretical notions. It is accompanied by certain misleading characterisations of Goldthorpe's

position, for example that orientations simply override technical differences in work organisation; and remains inadequately linked to his major case, that the initial basis of job choice does not govern subsequent bargaining issues in any determinate manner.[48] Nevertheless, though these limitations reduce the critical impact of his argument, Daniel does indicate major problems which arise from Goldthorpe's initial conjunction and then counterposition of technical exigencies and market situations in his analysis of the 'attitudes and behaviour of car assembly workers'.

This central issue of the relationship between choice and constraint in the real labour markets occupied by the Luton workers, compared with the idealised neo-classical model of atomistic choice, has more recently been pursued empirically by Grieco in her study of the recruitment practices of Vauxhall Motors in the post-war period.[49] She argues that many of the long-distance migrants moved to Luton and Vauxhall not simply through an elective and instrumentally calculative choice, but as a result of the firm's recruitment strategy of seeking out insecure or unemployed workers from those declining industrial sectors and regions which also lacked any developed tradition of trade unionism.[50] This meant, first, that such workers were already constrained by the processes of decline and contraction of employment opportunities in their communities of origin, for example by the "collapse of the East coast fishing industry in the mid to late 50's [which] induced an intensive recruitment campaign by Vauxhall in the affected areas".[51] As Grieco emphasises such a context involved an 'economic coercion' associated with "an atmosphere of employment insecurity" even when individual migrants had not themselves been unemployed; while for those who had lost their jobs this could be accompanied by pressures from state agencies since benefit entitlement depended upon evidence of 'serious' job search when such firms as Vauxhall made job offers.[52] Secondly this recruitment strategy involved processes of selection, both of areas of recruitment and of individual workers, which allowed the company considerable scope in seeking to construct a workforce of its choice:

> "Labour recruited from areas of high unemployment was highly screened in the Vauxhall selection process. The employment exchange performed the initial screening tasks, drawing up lists of potential candidates in advance of the annual presence of the employer's recruiting officers in the area. The detailed and

vetted work histories of the candidates were made available to the employer before final selection took place".[52]

Furthermore the Industrial Selection Scheme gave considerable scope for similar employment exchange and employer vetting in the case of migrants from London, where workers were more constrained by pressures in the housing market than by employment insecurity.[53] Thirdly Grieco points out that those workers who chose to move to Luton as a result of the company's recruitment drives were particularly reliant upon the company itself for information about the character of work and employment relations in the distant location, while it was unlikely that the recruiters would have sought to "dissuade labour with information on disutilities".[54] Thus any choices and trade-offs which these workers did entertain were likely to have been grounded in incomplete and idealised information and were thus vulnerable to disappointment.

In all of these respects Grieco emphasises that the pattern of relatively full employment in the British economy, and the prosperity and labour-market expansion in Luton, characteristic of the post-war boom, does not justify the heavy emphasis on worker choice, and the limited attention to constraint and power, in the Affluent Worker studies. Of course the empirical basis for these arguments is limited, as the major sources of information are the accounts of selection and recruitment policies provided in interviews with the Personnel Officer at Vauxhall and with employment officers in the North East of Scotland.[55] Thus the relevance and potential impact of these processes on the overall experience of Vauxhall workers is established, rather than any more detailed specification of the pattern of such experience among those workers or the success of Vauxhall in structuring its workforce in this way. In particular Grieco provides no specific evidence concerning the information communicated to potential recruits by the company, nor do we know how many stayed with Vauxhall or for how long.[56] Nevertheless her work provides important substantive reference points for any analytical critique of the conceptualisation of labour market choice by Goldthorpe and his colleagues.

Finally Grieco pinpoints a further aspect of employers' recruitment strategies, namely reliance on informal, often kin-based, networks for recruitment.[57] Such networks may offer advantages for employers in structuring their workforce, but in contrast with the position of the initial migrants discussed above they may also offer the recruits

substantial information about, and support in, the employment relationship. The resultant interrelation of work and kin relations again undermines an analysis which treats workers as atomistic job choosers, but in addition it also poses questions about the role of relations of kinship and sociability in workers' responses to changes within the social relations of immediate production. In this respect Grieco's critique of neo-classical assumptions about the labour market points beyond the market, towards arguments about effort bargaining which are considered under my next sub-heading.[58]

Turning to the other component of the efficient-assortment model, the priorities pursued by workers through the labour market, it should be noted that the above discussion tended to treat such priorities and preferences as 'givens' which were more or less effectively matched with employment conditions. This accorded with Goldthorpe's treatment of the labour market as a neutral transmission mechanism through which preferences might be exercised. However, as implied above, attention to the delimited alternatives among which workers choose, emphasises that their translation of preferences into priorities will itself be responsive to the range of real possibilities. Both the possibilities defined by particular labour markets, and broader exigencies arising from the specific circumstances of different workers (for example, the varied pressures associated with different phases of the life cycle) will condition the assignment of present priorities, without implying that such priorities are in any way 'given' or absolute. Once more this is noted by Daniel, who remarks that "the evidence is, rather, that amongst extra-plant factors, such things as the level of hire-purchase commitments and the number of children, are more significant determinants of behaviour, than any generalised, enduring orientation to work", though again this insight is not articulated into a coherent analytical critique.[59] It is at this point that Mann's critique of Dubin, mentioned earlier, does become directly relevant to an appraisal of Goldthorpe's position. The same illicit transformation characterises both Dubin's interpretation of his questionnaire data and Goldthorpe's interpretation of job choice, for they both read evidence of the factual, constraint conditioned, objectives and priorities of workers as evidence of the persistent underlying concerns of those workers, even though Goldthorpe's evidence is rather more sophisticated than Dubin's. As Mann emphasises, the explanatory power of factual objectives is rather different from that based on underlying concerns, because once again it suggests that particular bargaining stances rest primarily on problematical features of the social relations between employers and workers, rather than flowing logically from the bargain

represented by the formal labour contract.[60]

Two conclusions can be drawn from this discussion. The first is that the juxtaposition of labour market choice and technical constraints, which structures Goldthorpe's account, constitutes a misleading contrast, since the labour market defines choice processes within circumscribed limits; and these limits are quite inadequately theorised within Goldthorpe's neo-weberian framework, which, starting with a diversity of given market situations, simply oscillates between emphases on choice and constraint. The second, and related, conclusion is that a critique of technical implications analyses (for limiting attention to the technical exigencies characteristic of different work niches) cannot be mounted simply in terms of 'orientations brought to work'; but has to consider management-worker relations in a more inclusive fashion, extending beyond the boundaries of particular enterprises to address the wider relationships between employers as a class and wage workers at large, as they are mediated through the labour market and elsewhere. This is lost sight of in Goldthorpe's critique. In summary, the above discussion suggests that, while the development of particular areas of choice in specific labour market conditions may impress those moving through that market, the impact of that experience of choices is likely, even in relation to that specific phase of experience, to be qualified by awareness of the constraints within which it visibly operates. Thus for Vauxhall workers, for example, 'instrumentalism' must be seen as a mode of problematical adjustment rather than the pure imperative depicted by Goldthorpe; and the bargaining conduct of 'affluent workers' can no more be presumed to be narrowed by instrumentalism than it can be treated as inflamed simply by technical exigencies, a point made not only by Westergaard in the commentary considered in the previous chapter, but also by Daniel and by Richard Brown in their discussions of the ramifications of 'orientations to work'.[61]

One final comment on Goldthorpe's treatment of orientations and the labour market, relates to the treatment of traditionalism versus instrumentalism. In the 'orientations' paper, as elsewhere in the Affluent Worker publications, he quotes Weber's discussion of the phenomenon of the 'backward sloping supply curve' to indicate a history of sociological concern with "the investigation of orientations towards work in relation to aspects of individuals' total life situations."[62] In the context of the discussion of the conditions of 'efficient assortment', and in particular the emphasis upon full employment, however, Goldthorpe appears to converge with Weber not only in these general terms but also in the more specific contrast

drawn between traditional and economically 'rational' orientations. It is implied that the latter arise in conditions of full employment and expansion, which induce aspirations for, and pursuit of, economic improvements. The former, by implication, arise in conditions of stagnation and recession, which induce fatalism rather than market calculation. Here again, then, there is a hint that this traditionalism/rational-calculation contrast, which hinges upon Weber's characterisation of market rationality, is a critical axis within the more complex and developed typology of types of working class experience and imagery deployed by the authors of the Affluent Worker project, and one which underpins the contrast between the instrumental workers and others.

The Effort Bargain and Bargaining Perspectives

The diagnosis of the 'deviant' character of the car assemblers clearly rests upon claims about their distinctive bargaining perspectives and conduct, and in particular upon their especially narrow wage-oriented commitment to effort bargaining, which is sharply contrasted with the perspectives usually ascribed to assembly-line workers. It should be acknowledged immediately that some of the arguments of some of the 'orthodox' commentators on such workers are less simplistic than such a contrast implies, though as Goldthorpe himself acknowledges they tend to emphasise adaptive instrumentalism as opposed to prior orientations. Thus Blauner remains somewhat equivocal about the industrial relations consequences of assembly-line work: he argues that "the high pay and the security which is possible for the older employee with many years of seniority reduces the auto-worker's discontent and results in moderate satisfaction with the job as a whole, in contrast to the frequently strong dissatisfaction with the actual work routines", and he presumes that involvement in moderate trade unionism, sabotage, quitting, shop-floor counter-controls and day dreaming tend to represent alternative modes of worker response, though he also subscribes to a characterisation of global antipathy which contradicts such a presumption.[63] Chinoy more clearly distances himself from 'orthodoxy': he positively repudiates a technicist position and has much to say on the various modes of response which develop within the exigencies of both work and non-work life. Thus he argues that "they [automobile workers] seek in their jobs to satisfy desires derived not only from their co-workers but also from family and friends and from their experience as members of the community and the larger society ....they have come to see that their future well-being lies in a collective effort to achieve common goals, for example general wage increases, rather than in the private pursuit of success", and in tracing

their 'chronology of aspirations' and their mundane interpretation of the 'American dream' he makes clear that they do not correspond simply to the impact of work exigencies and neither do they sustain a pervasive antagonism.[64] Nevertheless Goldthorpe presents the Vauxhall assemblers as involved in a distinctive bargaining ethos, one which requires the theoretical innovation of attention to 'orientations to work' and which in turn lends credence to the orientations analysis. The major features of this distinctive bargaining ethos, according to Goldthorpe, were an <u>effective</u> commitment to work at Vauxhall based upon the cash nexus (evidenced by lowish quit-rates and absenteeism and also by non-dismissal by management); a propensity to view management-worker relations in terms of "reciprocity and interdependence rather than coercion and exploitation" (evidenced by responses to the 'teamwork' question especially); and most specifically, a focussing of bargaining concerns upon money returns.[65] Of these the account of the specific features of bargaining concerns is fundamental since it gives substantial content to the rather general characterisations of management-worker relations in teamwork terms, and provides the context within which the significance of labour turnover, dismissals or strike-frequency can be interpreted. Thus I will now turn to a detailed consideration of the evidence which Goldthorpe provides about the character of effort bargaining at Vauxhall, though I will return to some comments on the theme of teamwork at the end of this section.

Goldthorpe's major statement on the bargaining perspectives of the Vauxhall assemblers deserves detailed attention because it underlines his view of the effort bargain. He wrote:

> "these findings [concerning quit rates and the endorsement of the teamwork metaphor] do not, of course, imply that the men in our sample showed virtually <u>no</u> awareness of being involved in conflicts of interests with their employer. It was in fact clear that on certain issues such an awareness was quite marked. On the matter of work study, for instance, sixty-one per cent of those who expressed an opinion (N= 84) saw work study engineers as being more concerned with forcing men to keep up a fast pace of work than with the general smoothness of production operations -- that is to say, these officials were regarded chiefly as agents of management with specifically managerial interests in mind. Furthermore, on the matter of pay, eighty per cent of the sample felt that the firm could pay them more without doing harm to its future prospects; and the kinds of reason by far the most frequently given for this point of view related to the size of the firm's profits and to the right of workers to a larger share of

these. On issues of this nature, then, the limits of 'teamwork' were reached, and an 'oppositional' outlook became more likely. Such issues in fact concerned the actual basis on which teamwork should rest, and were thus, one would suggest, of quite crucial importance to men whose definition of work was very largely in terms of 'money for effort'. However, the point we would emphasise here is that these workers' sense of being in contention with their employer appeared to be largely confined to matters of the kind in question; that is matters immediately relevant to the 'effort bargain'. We could find no evidence, for example, of any widespread sense of conflict over such issues as deployment, job rights, work rules or discipline, which in other industrial contexts are, of course, frequent sources of dispute. And this was so even though Vauxhall management follows a relatively 'tough' policy on a number of these questions."[66]

This characterisation of workers' attitudes and conduct raises a number of quite fundamental problems of interpretation which are glossed over in Goldthorpe's various discussions of the Vauxhall workers; ranging from the very notion of the 'effort bargain', through his treatment of management policies, to the character of workers' bargaining responses. I will comment on each of these in turn.

Firstly, then, Goldthorpe seems to regard it as self-evident that the pursuit of issues 'immediately relevant to the effort bargain' defines a narrow range of bargaining concerns flowing from the initial terms of the employment contract. However the notion of the 'effort bargain' was specifically devised to emphasise the problematical implications of the labour contract, and to explore the range of initiatives, assumptions and assessments bearing upon the dynamic stabilisation of production activities.[67] Thus Behrend notes that "the employment contract, concluded when a worker is engaged, does not define the amount of work a worker is expected to do ... what the employer purchases is not a given series of services, but a supply of effort for performing particular types of services involved in changing work-assignments."[68] While Goldthorpe's interpretation focusses upon work study and appears to exclude bargaining concerned with the impact of standardisation and fragmentation of work on one hand and challenges to managerial prerogatives over deployment of labour and discipline on the other, other students of shop-floor bargaining have argued that considerations of job interest, manning levels and tedium impinge upon conceptions of work effort, while collective bargaining activities arising to regulate effort ramify into bargaining concerns

addressing discipline and the deployment of labour.[69] Thus neither the theoretical antecedents nor the empirical studies associated with the notion of 'effort bargaining' can be mobilised to support Goldthorpe's account of the self-limiting locus of money bargaining; if anything they raise questions concerning the narrow definition of matters directly relevant to the effort bargain. At the same time his own empirical material, presented in greatest detail but still in somewhat fragmentary fashion in the longer unpublished paper, appears a lot less unequivocal than he allows in the published version quoted above. Even in regard to the data on attitudes to work study and pay increases this is the case, but it is particularly true of the characterisation of management strategy as both progressive and 'tough'.

In relation to the attitude material two points deserve note. Firstly, Goldthorpe acknowledges that, in the context of a time-rate wage system, "the setting of 'standard times' for particular operations does not in Vauxhall have any immediate effect upon wage rates" but adds "it is, though, an important factor in determining the pace at which an operative must work and thus has direct relevance for the effort bargain."[70] This represents an important recognition of the indirect relationship between pay and managerial regulation of work, and of the continuing concern of Vauxhall workers about the detail of work pace despite this relative autonomy from pay; but what remains unexplained is how other facets of management initiative, on such matters as deployment and work rules, which similarly impinge upon issues of effort and pace while having only indirect links with pay, fall outside the scope of workers' concerns. Secondly, it is worth noting that the Vauxhall workers' attitudes about pay increases, backed as they were by what Goldthorpe terms "arguments of a reasoned and sophisticated kind" which he (oddly) counterposes to "attitudes of an exceptionally militant or 'irresponsible' nature", often appeared to uncouple such increases from any notion of cooperatively produced gains in efficiency and productivity (only twenty per cent fell into that sort of category) to emphasise either the sheer availability of more cash given levels of profits (forty-two per cent) or the fact that other car firms pay more (sixteen per cent).[71] Given these features it is difficult to extract Goldthorpe's emphasis on the limited scope of potential conflict around 'money for effort', as against an emphasis on a considerable <u>potential</u> for conflict given the open-ended character of these 'bases on which teamwork should rest'; unless, of course, management strategy and commercial exigencies are taken as

stable and unproblematical givens. However, in these articles as elsewhere in the Affluent Worker series, Goldthorpe's discussion of management policies hardly advances beyond a series of labels — 'advanced personnel policies', 'tough' policies on job rights and discipline — a treatment which appears to follow from the prime concern of the Cambridge researchers to specify the cluster of work and labour market features characteristic of particular categories of employees, as distinct from any analysis of the dynamic of relations between corporate capital and wage workers. Some indication of the inadequacies of such an approach can be traced in Goldthorpe's discussions of job security on the one hand and tough manning policies on the other.

The topic of job security is touched on only fleetingly in Goldthorpe's papers, for example in the remark that Vauxhall gave workers the opportunity of high wages "while offering too, one should perhaps add, a reasonable degree of security and the benefits of advanced welfare and personnel policies".[72] No attempt is made, though, to locate that experience in relation to purposive management policies or the specific commercial environment of the firm; though it does emerge in the later 'industrial' monograph that those workers at Vauxhall interviewed by the researchers nearly all enjoyed considerable seniority, enough to protect them from those lay-offs that did occur at the firm.[73] In terms of the purpose of Goldthorpe's papers on the Vauxhall workers, to expose and understand a deviant case at odds with conventional accounts of industrial relations in the motor industry, this is a very significant omission. This is so because those conventional accounts almost invariably assign great importance, in their analyses of bargaining attitudes and conduct, to those patterns of job insecurity which they suppose to characterise the motor industry. For example Chinoy notes that:

> "while the post-war demand for automobiles forestalled an immediate return to the extended seasonal lay-offs of the past, workers in the industry have suffered from regular bouts of temporary unemployment....the fluctuations of the economy during the past five years have alternately offered new opportunities and created temporary unemployment and job insecurity (the auto industry, as we noted earlier, is particularly susceptible to the ups and downs of the business cycle)....with their experience of regular seasonal layoffs and otherwise erratic employment, automobile workers have translated the traditional emphasis upon advancement to better-paying jobs into a concern with steady work. They have come to look at wages not only in terms of hourly rates, but also with an eye to

how much one can earn over an extended period of time."[74] It should also be noted that this emphasis is not peculiar to the somewhat 'deviant' non-technicist analysis developed by Chinoy; for in this and other respects Blauner's account, while remaining basically concerned with specific constellations of work features impinging directly upon the worker, transcends the limitations of a narrow preoccupation with 'technique'.[75] His recognition of the impact of economic exigencies impinging "though usually in an indirect fashion" upon work experience even receives some brief acknowledgement in his overall prognosis for the future of industrial work, though it is clearly subordinated to his analysis of technological changes and also in other respects clearly deficient.[76] Finally, at the same time that Goldthorpe and his colleagues were preparing the publications of the Affluent Worker project, another Cambridge team working on the motor industry, this time of economists and industrial relations specialists, were reaffirming the centrality of the experience of spasmodic layoffs and job insecurity for the industrial relations of the British motor industry generally.[77] What all this implies is that the specific significance of the 'deviant' Vauxhall workers could properly be assessed only in relation to the policy and market parameters which underpin the record of job security which appears to set Vauxhall, and particularly this specific group of workers, somewhat apart from other motor manufacturers, both here and in the United States. Such a consideration would appear to have been necessary both for the narrow purpose of an effective confrontation with technical implications theorists and for the wider task of developing an adequate account of the class situation of the affluent assembly-line worker.

In relation to 'tough' manning policies the difficulties with Goldthorpe's account are twofold. Firstly, this terse characterisation once again remains unlocated in relation to any coherent management strategy or related commercial exigencies. Secondly, the specific manifestations of this policy on the shop-floor remain unclear. This is most evident in the more extended discussion in the unpublished paper, especially when note is taken of the asides and qualifications furnished in the footnotes. There it is noted that "Vauxhall management follows a very 'tough' policy on some of these issues ... e.g. the firm insists on the right of management to transfer men from job to job or department to department at will; then again, the unions are allowed no direct part in the operation of the firm's Grading Scheme", and also that "area managers and supervisors stated that cases did occasionally occur of

'cliques' being broken up when they were felt to prejudice efficient working and of course some redeployment of the men on a particular line is likely to be necessary whenever the speed of the line is changed."[78] But Goldthorpe also goes on to add "on the other hand, though, shifts between departments or between different types of work -- e.g. from machining to assembly -- do not seem to be so frequent as Weller and Zweig imply. The 100 men in our sample, with an average length of employment at Vauxhall of 8¼ years, had in total made 163 such moves: i.e. at a rate of roughly one every 5 years."[79] This latter finding prompted the following rather equivocal comment from Goldthorpe: "it has several times been alleged that Vauxhall management prefers to move men around from job to job a good deal to discourage the growth of any worker solidarity which might prove threatening to its authority. This may or may not be true."[80] As it stands, then, the evidence presented in these articles does not appear to justify the unqualified assertion about managerial toughness in these matters, contained in the key passage from the British Journal of Sociology article quoted above, any more than it would support the opposite assessment made by the journalist Graham Turner, namely that "Vauxhall is so conciliatory that it is accussed of softness."[81] Certainly the rhetoric of managerial prerogatives appears to have been accompanied both by a sparing resort to their stringent enforcement and by a sophisticated paternalistic mode of concession-making: there is thus an obvious need for a much more detailed exploration of these and other exigencies of control and counter-control on the shop-floor, to sustain or to refute Goldthorpe's interpretation.

So far I have argued that Goldthorpe's understanding of the logic of workers' bargaining concerns was formulated in the context of an account of effort bargaining and management policies which displays several crucial and related inadequacies. Firstly, there was an unwarranted presumption that 'effort bargaining' would by definition be self-limiting. Secondly, there was no real examination of the inter-relationship at the level of policy formation of 'advanced personnel policies', high wages and 'tough' defence of managerial prerogatives. Thirdly, there was little discussion of the concrete implications of these interrelated policies on the shop-floor. Finally such policies and their implementation remain totally unlocated in relation to the commercial environment of Vauxhall or its parent company, General Motors. It might be added here that it was these deficiencies, and in particular the lack of such a location of corporate policy, which allowed Daniel to develop his rather ironic accusation of managerial bias in the Luton

research with relative impunity, despite Goldthorpe's explicit espousal of 'value freedom'.[82]

Turning finally to workers' responses to management strategies, here Goldthorpe's treatment was even more cursory. Of course the clear implication of Goldthorpe's account was that managerial prerogatives do not require stringent enforcement because they remain virtually uncontested by cash-oriented bargainers. However, this was not documented, while there are strong analytical grounds for questioning a picture of uniform worker passivity in this area. Firstly, the discrepancies in work pressure and work autonomy among different assembly and sub-assembly jobs, of which (as Goldthorpe stresses) workers are very much aware, appear to afford the basis for equity-based bargaining over work-pace, work organisation and seniority rights, even in the context of a dominant concern with cash; the more so, perhaps, in the context already noted, of a time-rate wage system with a narrow range of payment levels, where cash compensation might be less readily negotiable than under piecework payment systems. Certainly it would appear important to know how management and union actions interplay around the "much competition and manoeuvering" which Goldthorpe reports occurs for "the relatively few favoured 'positions'."[83] Secondly, and more abstractly, once emphasis is placed upon a continuing managerial quest for the regulation and intensification of effort and the associated reorganisation of production, in line with both theorists of 'effort bargaining' and attention to corporate strategies, it is evident that workers cannot simply occupy a work niche characterised by given work deprivations, but must rather confront evolving managerial demands involving changing pressures and constraints. Returning, with these arguments in mind, to Goldthorpe's own evidence: while Vauxhall workers may not manifest an aggressive concern with job control, it would seem unlikely, given their stress on gaining a greater share of the profits expressed in the stark terms noted above, that they would be particularly amenable to 'productivity bargaining' type initiatives which would further diminish their work autonomy and capacity for job control in return for increased cash. Thus, while Goldthorpe appears to regard "evidence of these workers showing great reluctance to being 'brought out' of some work practise from which, they had come to realise, they derived important non-monetary satisfactions" as unlikely, and to some extent contradictory to worker instrumentalism, the report by Beynon and Nichols that "in 1969 Vauxhall workers at Luton and Dunstable recorded a split vote on pay increases

associated with a productivity deal" would seem much less surprising than Goldthorpe allows.[84] All in all, these remarks suggest a creative tension between cash and control issues rather than a simple subordination of the latter to the former. Such an interpretation would be perfectly consistent with Goldthorpe's evidence of a quite well supported stewards organisation operating against a background of 'superficial camaraderie': though its implications could only be traced out in the context of further analysis of the uneven effectiveness of such worker organisation in different areas and issues of bargaining, an unevenness which is hinted at by evidence that a minority of workers judged that Vauxhall's industrial relations record and strategy rested upon trade union weakness.[85] Goldthorpe, in contrast, appears to regard any form of workplace counter-control as incompatible with instrumentalism; a view which prompts his judgement that "instrumental orientation, we would suspect, is far more widespread in modern industry than sociologists have often implied in their concern to refute the assumptions of economic individualism and establish the importance of solidary ties between a worker and his mates in the firm."[86] Such a contra-position of alternative analyses precisely fails to recognize that the studies which had been carried out under the rubric of effort bargaining were specifically concerned to contest human-relations analyses of worker non-rationality, and were concerned to show how parochial counter-control strategies represented rational long-term wage strategies for many groups of shop-floor workers, as well as nurturing some interest in creating a modicum of job autonomy for its own sake.[87] Here, as elsewhere, Goldthorpe's polemic, caught between the poles of neo-classical market rationality, human relations groupism and technical implications, comes to misrepresent aspects of prior work in the sociology of industry, which, in one way or another, had sought to grapple with the social relations of immediate production. Certainly his account at this point excluded all but the most narrow conception of the collectivism involved in 'instrumental collectivism'.

Before moving to a summary of the implications of the above discussion one more piece of evidence, adduced by Goldthorpe in his interpretation of the character of instrumental collectivism, deserves a brief comment. Alongside the more specific attitudes to work study and pay rises which have already been discussed Goldthorpe also reported responses to a question regarding the likeness of the firm to a football team, and interpreted the predominant endorsement of the team analogy as evidence against a generalised conflictual perspective and in favour of a cooperation which pivoted upon cash satisfactions, in the manner outlined in the earlier quotation. A critical implication of his interp-

retation of the responses to the team question was that "recognition of the interdependence of management and labour was more prominent than that of the issues of conflict between them" while workers' further comments on the question suggested more specifically "fairly clearly that, in the eyes of these men, a cooperative attitude towards management was important to the effective operation of the plant and would also, in most cases, turn out to be in their own best interests."[88] Such an interpretation has been challenged, though, in a manner which converges with the discussion of social imagery, both in emphasising the alternative nuances of such an idiom as that of 'teamwork' and in stressing the ambiguous relation between generalised attitudes and specific forms of conduct. Beynon in particular has drawn out the various meanings which might be given to the notion of 'cooperation' in the context of capitalist production:

> "it isn't an either-or question of being like a football team or being like two opposing camps. Factory production involves both. Because production has a social basis the factory can obviously be seen, at some level, as a collectivity with management operating in a coordinating role. The contradiction of factory production, and the source of contradictory elements within class consciousness, is rooted in the fact that the exploitation of workers is achieved through collective, coordinated activities within both the factory and society generally."[89]

Such an approach, drawing upon Marx's discussion of the capitalist's role in the organisation of 'cooperation' in capitalist production, emphasises both that the idiom of cooperation finds sustenance in features of the social organisation of capitalist production rather than being founded simply in the strength of the wage nexus per se, and that the experience of cooperation will be shot through with contradictory meanings and potential conflict rather than simply serving to contain and limit such conflict. In both these respects Beynon suggests that Goldthorpe's evidence cannot be deployed to underwrite his analysis of the bargaining implications of instrumentalism. A similar point has also been made by Ramsay, who compared the questions and answers obtained by Goldthorpe et al with other variant and more probing queries about the likeness of firms to football teams. His crucial point was that endorsement of the team metaphor could only be interpreted as evidence of "a chiefly pragmatic acceptance by employees who accept that one way or another the current relation has to be lived with. Cooperation is offered on a negotiated basis, and any attempt to implement in practice the view that it is offered for loyalty's sake could be rudely disrupted if it leads to

interference with the contractual conditions of acceptance."[90] It should be said that Goldthorpe's interpretation of the team question, alongside his evidence about the workers' views on work study and on pay, focussed much more on stable contractual conditions underwriting cooperation than upon any generalised managerial capacity to mobilise loyalty.[91] However, Ramsey argues that Goldthorpe's interpretation of the material in terms of coordination (not integration), though "somewhat more plausible...still overemphasises the claim that awareness of conflict must be subsidiary to awareness of interdependence."[92] What these criticisms suggest, then, is that the notion that Goldthorpe advances, that the effort bargain touched "the actual basis on which 'teamwork' should rest", throws into doubt his wider claim, that effort bargaining conflict was contained on a narrow front in the framework of experienced cooperation. Only in the absence of any developed analysis of the constraints bounding labour market choice, and with minimal attention to the dynamics of management control over labour and production, could such an interpretation be plausibly sustained.

The main thrust of this commentary upon Goldthorpe's treatment of effort bargaining has been an assertion that he provides a severely impoverished treatment of corporate strategies and particularly of the managerial organisation of effort and manning in the production process. Such an impoverished treatment can properly be seen as a <u>consequence</u> of the Goldthorpian focus on class situation defined in terms of market situation and technical exigencies. In turn it must have <u>facilitated</u> the switch in focus which was the hallmark of Goldthorpe's interventions into theoretical controversy within industrial sociology. For that switch occurred within the parameters of this paradigm of class analysis: from technical implications as concomitants of market situations to the emphasis of given orientations, which are assorted into some correspondence with socio-technical niches through the operation of the market mechanism.

Over against such a truncated consideration of the dynamics of the effort bargain in the <u>Affluent Worker</u> investigation, the critics of that study have taken a more developed analysis of the disposition and control of labour power within production as a fundamental basis of their critique. This was a theme, however inadequately theorised, in Daniel's early criticisms of Goldthorpe; but it was central to the arguments of marxist critics such as Blackburn, Beynon and Nichols and Westergaard.[93] Westergaard provided a somewhat equivocal treatment of this issue in his discussion of the 'brittle' character of the cash-nexus. He focussed

most of his attention upon the impact upon affluent workers of the fluctuation and potential insecurity of earnings, but noted that "should the amount and dependency of the money be threatened, his resigned toleration of the lack of discretion, control and 'meaning' attached to the job could no longer be guaranteed", referring to Robin Blackburn's analysis of the cash nexus for support.[94] In turn Blackburn emphasised that the employment relation between employers and workers does not simply involve the exchange of cash for labour, but involves the sale of labour power, "an inpalpable potentiality whose ultimate development it is for the employer to determine" in accordance with the imperatives of profitability, and with inevitable ramifications in work organisation which incur the resistance and opposition of the workers who embody that labour power.[95] It has to be said that this characterisation of the labour contract, drawing upon Marx's analysis in Capital, should be seen as the kernal of Blackburn's critique of Goldthorpe, rather than simply focussing upon his somewhat over-enthusiastic interpretation of particular episodes of industrial conflict at Vauxhall's; though some attention to the latter will be found at the end of this chapter. Finally the later work of both Beynon and Nichols pivots upon such an analysis of the control and counter-control of the organisation of labour power, and, as has been seen in the previous chapter, this constituted the nub of their critique of the Goldthorpian diagnosis. Thus they insist that:

> "to establish that workers have a distinctive orientation to work is not to justify an analysis of work in which money issues are considered independant of issues of control. Even if workers seek money alone and in no way seek control, it still has to be recognised that money is obtained in the context of a work situation i.e. the pursuit of money is mediated by rules. Whereas there is often conflict between the demands made by workers for higher wages and those directed at control over work, these ends can more often be seen as complementary. Both sets of demands can have consequences that add to the worker's experience, so that at the very least the rules of work and the control issues pertaining to them require analysis in their own right."[96]

Thus all these marxian commentaries suggest that an adequate understanding of the dominant features of work 'situations' can only be gained through examination of the formulation and implementation of employer policies concerned with the disposition of labour power according to the requirements of profitability, and, alongside this, consideration of the major tendencies and dynamics of individual and collective response to those policies among workers. How far they actually develop an adequate analysis

in these terms will be considered in the next chapter, but for the moment I wish to note that, in comparison with such a programme, Goldthorpe's account of the conditions of work and employment at Vauxhall remains static and abstracted from the wider social relations of production. This static treatment of work, in terms of a given array of technical circumstances and personnel policies, allows Goldthorpe to portray workers' concerns as unproblematical and direct consequences of their having 'contracted in' to known work deprivations in return for increased wages. A sensitivity to the dynamics of the disposition of labour power would, on the other hand, underline the fundamental social relations between employers and workers which must be expected to generate rather problematical and precarious patterns of bargaining and conflict around 'instrumental' commitments to work.

It should be noted, at this point, that the above argument does not suggest that wage workers, whether 'affluent' or otherwise, will subordinate wage interests to the pursuit of some aggressive 'control-oriented' priorities, for there are major structural and ideological pressures towards 'instrumentalism' which bear upon all employees to some degree.[97] Rather, it suggests that there are substantial pressures, also generic to capitalist production relations, which persistently pose issues of work intensity, job control and autonomy, and also wider questions about corporate power, for those same employees. From the other side of the capital/labour relation the interplay between wage levels and intrinsic features of employment is also evident. What is experienced by the worker in terms of issues of work organisation, pressure and discipline, is experienced by the employer in terms of the need to recoup wage costs and gain profits, both through the elaboration of managerial control and the reorganisation of the labour process. For, as many commentators have noted, high wages (and even more so, continuous concessions by management on the wages front) cannot be regarded as straightforward features of bargaining: it cannot be presumed that employers will be able and willing to pay.[98] Of course, this nexus of relations between wage pressures, profit levels and managerial productivity initiatives does not operate in any simple and uniform way upon all employers. While some may be able to adopt a hign-wage strategy underwritten by distinctive phases of accumulation or market circumstances, others may be unable to respond to their employees' wage demands (perhaps fueled by comparisons with employers of the former type) on the basis of their somewhat different competitive position.[99] However, these issues, some of which are touched on again in later chapters, cannot even be addressed within the scope of the Affluent Worker perspective, in which corporate strategies and commercial exigencies fall almost entirely out of view.

Technical Implications and Orientations to Work - a Resumé

Having considered both the labour market and the work process I can now return to an overall assessment of the structure and logic of Goldthorpe's so-called 'detour' into industrial sociology and his critique of what was the consistent polemical target in all the specifically 'industrial' publications of the Luton project, namely technical implications analysis. The terms of that critique focussed, of course, upon the assumption of "too close and too direct an association....between on the one hand, the assemblers experience of work on the line, and on the other, his attitudes and behaviour towards the enterprise in which his work is performed."[100] On the basis of the Vauxhall evidence Goldthorpe went on to argue that such an assumption rests on the neglect of a significant 'variable', "the orientations which men bring to their employment and which mediate between the objective features of the work situation, and workers actual experience of, and reaction to, this situation."[101]

The first point I wish to make is that the critique of technical implications analysis formulated in this fashion was implicit in the earliest essays of Lockwood and Goldthorpe on the embourgeoisement analysis: for those essays embraced an account of class formation in work, the labour market and the wider community which saw broader patterns of consciousness as the product of the whole round of people's experience; and indeed, to the extent that they drew on the work of Bott for inspiration, those essays portrayed the close social relations of family and kin as the crucible within which outlooks and orientations to the wider world were moulded. In such a context the adoption of a technical implications approach to the characterisation of work situations clearly did not imply an unmediated response by workers to their work experience. No doubt the terms and force of such a critique were strengthened in response to the Luton findings, before being given a definitive Lockwoodian interpretation in the discussion of 'Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society', but the theoretical antecedents of at least one and probably both authors must surely have implied a diffuse critique of the functionalist assumptions which were coming to inform technical implications analyses, even while a technology typology was being incorporated into their own research.[102]

However the form in which the orientations argument is advanced becomes stronger than the formulations above, to claim that orientations

constitute "a crucial <u>independent</u> variable relative to what occurs in the work situation" which serves as the predominant explanation of workplace attitudes and behaviour.[103] Among critical commentators on the Luton research some have seen this strong version of the orientations argument as the particular product of the chosen research site and sample, and especially of the high proportion of geographically and socially mobile workers involved. MacKenzie suggests this quite strongly as the basis for the dilution of class analysis which he discerns in the project publications.[104] Richard Brown also implies it, though rather more tentatively, almost as an excuse for the particularly stark and indefensible formulation of the orientations argument advanced by Goldthorpe in relation to a thoroughgoing instrumentalism.[105] I believe that these arguments have to be treated with some care, even though the specific labour market situation in Luton must have had some impact on the project, for the following reasons. The first, and most important, is that the discovery of the failure of the analytical and explanatory power of the work situation is itself premissed upon an impoverished characterisation of that situation; one which followed from the initial adoption of a technicist typology of work situations. The second concerns the considerable ambiguity which surrounded the characterisation of the choice and constraint involved in the market mechanism which supposedly facilitated efficient assortment. The third and final point relates to the discussion in the preceeding paragraph, namely that other research sites with rather different labour market conditions would still, presumably, have sustained some variant of the argument embedded in the initial theoretical framework, distinguishing work situations as conditions of social action from the meanings given to those situations as a result of the outlooks synthesised from work and non-work experience.

The main point I wish to insist on here is the first of those just made, concerning the continuing and critical role in Goldthorpe's argument of <u>descriptive</u> elements of a technicist variety despite the critique of technical implications theorising. He contested the unmediated significance of a socio-technical inventory of features of work situations for an explanation of Vauxhall's industrial relations. However, his alternative mode of analysis, with its focus on assortment into established job niches which encapsulate narrowly focussed effort bargains, itself hinged upon a socio-technical conception of work situations, as stable clusters of immediate rewards and deprivations arising out of technical circumstances. As was suggested earlier, this

commitment to a technical inventory of aspects of work situations arose as a partial specification of a neo-weberian analysis of class situations as market situations and their organisational concomitants: that is as a set of given conditions of action, with minimal attention being given to the social relations through which those conditions had been forged. This commitment remained of particular significance throughout the project, because it discouraged the posing of questions about the dynamic of social relations between capital and labour, either in aggregate terms which bear upon the significance of labour market choice and constraint, or in the more specific terms of corporate strategies for profitable production and the responses they elicit from the workforce. In this way it sharply circumscribed the terrain upon which Goldthorpe et al conducted their research, their critiques and polemics, and their positive analyses of the class location and bargaining perspectives of the Affluent Worker.

A final noteworthy consequence of this commitment within the industrial sociology publications, and one of direct relevance to the structure of Goldthorpe's polemic against technical determinism, would appear to be an inadequate scrutiny of the manner in which some of his opponents qualify or locate their socio-technical accounts in relation to a broader dynamic of social relations. I have already noted the extent to which Chinoy deviates from a socio-technical orthodoxy, both in giving considerable attention to the impact of collective bargaining on socio-technical exigencies, and in stressing the intermittent character of industrial conflict, and it would also be interesting to know how Goldthorpe placed Melman's study of the Coventry Standard plant, with its distinctive gang system, in relation to the other studies he cites on the motor industry.[106] More centrally, however, though Blauner's account reduces in the last analysis to a socio-technical implications schema, his actual discussion incorporates a good many qualifications and subtleties concerning both work organisation and context, which inevitably impinge on his prognostications concerning industrial conflict. Thus Goldthorpe credits him with an emphasis upon 'irresponsible' and perpetual antagonism among assembly-line workers, without acknowledging that he also emphasised the extent to which formal union organisation had "reduced through the years the workers' individual and collective powerlessness against the forces of technology and management", institutionalising many aspects of industrial conflict and regulating speed-up, so that it was only within, and in some respects against, that pattern of institutionalised conflict that illicit control strategies and

occasional sabotage occurred.[107] Of course other socio-technical theorists, such as Woodward, did treat technical exigencies and their associated 'roles' as the cutting edge of a complex of social and economic relations, which are simply assimilated, under the rubric of functionalist analysis, into a "view of the functioning of the enterprise as a production system"; and against such accounts Goldthorpe's critique was more appropriate though narrowly based.[108] However, despite its many faults, Blauner's approach remains distinctly different in rationale and scope, and Goldthorpe's failure to recognise this indicates some of the weaknesses of his own conceptualisation.

The fundamental point which I have been concerned to establish in my reconsideration of Goldthorpe's engagement with technical implications analyses has been that his and Lockwood's understanding of class situation in neo-weberian terms, and their 'operationalisation' of that understanding by adoption of a technology typology of varieties of work situation, provides a crucial pivot around which Goldthorpe's analysis of 'orientations to work' is elaborated. Both by providing a conceptual framework within which evidence was interpreted, and, relatedly, by sponsorship of a research strategy which gave minimal attention to the social organisation of production, it underpinned the development of inadequate and one-sided analyses of job-choice and effort bargaining. In this sense the ultimate development of a critique of technical implications theories on the narrow grounds of the importation by workers of distinctive orientations into work, and the implied denial of the significance of work relations for class consciousness, rested upon, and was facilitated by, an initially impoverished conception of class relations at the point of production.

Having argued this case I now wish to consider two further aspects of the industrial analysis advanced by the Affluent Worker authors, to round out my assessment of their account of the class location and conflict potential of 'affluent' manual workers: firstly their treatment of the variations in the positions of the different groups of workers studied at Luton; and secondly the debate about the significance of the strike record, and further strikes, at Vauxhall in particular. Each of these issues will be given brief consideration in the remainder of this chapter.

Varieties of Experience of the Cash Nexus: the Affluent Worker Industrial Monograph Revisited

The basic structure of the argument advanced in the 'industrial monograph' of the Affluent Worker series -- the full report of the industrial findings of the Luton study, corresponds with that rehearsed by Goldthorpe in the earlier articles on the Vauxhall assemblers. That basic structure, as we have seen, involved (i) the juxtaposition of evidence about past and present job preferences to expose the centrality of the cash nexus, and (ii) an emphasis on the disjunction between immediate work experience and attitudes towards employers and unions, to demonstrate the impact of an instrumental orientation which, brought to the workplace, 'devalues' work deprivations. Within this argument Goldthorpe et al did not ignore differences between occupational groups, for their report documents in some detail such differences. Rather, they argue that:

> "our findings reveal that for the workers in these five groups [craftsmen, setters, process operators, machinists and assemblers], industrial employment offers significantly different patterns of satisfaction and deprivation, and further that these men differ too in the stance they take towards work and in the meaning they give to it. At the same time, though, our data also indicate that these differences are capable of being understood as variations on a theme; that notwithstanding differences in skill and job content, our affluent workers for the most part share in a relatively distinctive orientation towards work, and one which, it may be suggested, is not unconnected with their affluent condition."[109]

It is this relative unity of experience and outlook which is contrasted with the distinctive positions of both white-collar workers and traditional manual workers, in ways which have already received some attention in the previous chapter. As was seen in that chapter, this emphasis on the relative unity of the market position of the affluent workers serves to underpin the analysis of the manual/non-manual class boundary which is completed in the final Affluent Worker monograph. At the same time the 'devaluation' of internal work deprivations characteristic of instrumentalism is contrasted with the outlook of traditional manual workers with their attenuated 'economic rationality.'[110]

However, in view of the reservations which I have expressed in the previous section of this chapter, concerning on one hand the ambiguities,

and the incomplete characterisation, of the choice and constraint involved in the labour market, and on the other the narrow treatment of effort bargaining and management-worker relations in production, it may be necessary to question the strong formulation of the theme of 'unity in diversity' which is the continuing refrain of the industrial monograph. Two obvious questions arise from such a query. The first concerns the significance of the variations within the Luton sample, from the point of view of the Cambridge team's analytical focus on variations in work and market situations, and their insistence upon the uniform class location, in <u>their</u> terms, of these manual workers. The second concerns how far the complexities and instabilities of effort bargaining, implied in my earlier critique, can be detected at work in variant forms for these different occupational groupings; how far .. would they qualify the Goldthorpian diagnosis of the coherence and stability of calculative commitments to work among non-traditional manual workers? I will look at each of these in turn.

Looking first at the 'class situation' of these different groups of workers, it is clear that they do not occupy a homogenous market and work situation in the terms of Goldthorpe and Lockwood's original conceptual framework. The evident contrasts are between the craftsmen and setters on the one hand and the other groups, all semi-skilled workers, on the other; though the positions of the craftsmen and setters need also to be distinguished, because the former occupy an advantaged position by virtue of craft training which transcends particular firms, while the latter ove their advantages to advance within an internal labour market which makes their 'skills' more or less enterprise specific. Paradoxically, Goldthorpe have a good deal to say about these broad distinctions and present large portions of their data in terms of a rough skilled/semi-skilled contrast, but they fail to recognise the real sources of division within the working class which they have charted <u>within</u> their sample. Their analysis, bounded on one side by overdrawn contrasts between the labour market situations and work experience of 'bureaucratic' (though only 'weakly' bureaucratic) clerks and 'instrumental' manual workers, and on the other by the critique of human relations and technical implications theorists for neglecting orientations to work, succeeds in sustaining the theme of generic unity against the implications of their own neo-weberian starting point; but in such a way that some of the difficulties of demarcation associated with that starting point can be glossed over. At best they conceptualise the unity of their sample

in the general terms of their all being employees selling their labour-power for a wage, but then it is unclear how that suffices to distinguish them from either the routine white-collar workers who they assimilate to their bureaucratic ideal-type or the traditional manual workers who provide their other pole of comparison. In relation to the latter comparison Goldthorpe et al appear to hinge their discussion on the existence of strong parochial workgroup ties among such 'traditional' groups as miners and steelworkers, while recognising that most factory-workers will follow the pattern of instrumentalism they associate with mere sale of labour power. Thus they note that:

> "we feel it important to add here that a comparison made between the workers we have studied and other factory workers, who differed only in being somewhat less affluent, might well be far less striking and very much a matter of degree."[111]

This, though, implies an incompatability between workgroup solidarities and the cash nexus which, as the material from Coal Is Our Life mentioned earlier suggests, is quite dubious; while it also glosses over the sorts of occupational differences within factory employment which their own study itself exposes. Here again, as in the discussion of the broader class analysis of the Affluent Worker, Goldthorpe et al appear to proceed from a generic characterisation of wage labour to a substantive exemplification in a manner which implies a literal identity between the two, and one which provides a licence for more or less arbitrary inclusions and exclusions in the tasks of class demarcation and internal discrimination and typification.

With these problems in mind it is nevertheless possible to trace the internal variations in condition and perspectives among the occupational categories of the Luton sample. Goldthorpe and his colleagues take as their own point of departure a documentation of the distinctive work situations of the different occupational groups, though they formulate the comparisons less in terms of the factual constraints they face than in terms of the expectations which they entertain:

> "with the majority of the semi-skilled men, at least, their work was largely experienced and regarded as an expenditure of effort made with the aim and expectation of extrinsic rather than intrinsic returns: in other words, the meaning which was given to work was essentially that of labour. From this point of view, the relatively high job satisfaction of the setters is then to be understood as a

result of their having been promoted from the ranks of the semi-skilled -- whose expectations regarding work they presumably once shared -- into jobs which are more directly rewarding as well as being better paid. And, on the other hand, the degree of dissatisfaction revealed by the craftsmen -- centring on social and technical aspects of their work -- may be related to the fact that these men have expectations which are generally greater than those of the workers in the other groups; expectations, that is, which take for granted fairly high economic returns and which are also concerned with the degree to which the individual is allowed to exercise his skills in an autonomous way."[112]

However Goldthorpe et al portray these variations as variations on a theme by emphasising that both the craftsmen and the semi-skilled workers have confronted a labour market trade-off between "intrinsic and extrinsic rewards which different employments offer"; and one which is reflected in the grounds which workers give for taking and retaining the better paying jobs.[113] This similarity of trade-offs on a 'horizontal' labour market should not, however, conceal the distinctiveness of the positions of the skilled and semi-skilled workers, a point already touched on in the earlier discussion of the manual/non-manual class boundary in the previous chapter. This distinctiveness is apparent, though it is not emphasised, in the text of the 'industrial' monograph. First of all, these 'affluent workers' still differ significantly in their levels of affluence, and in a direction which emphasises the varied <u>levels</u> at which any trade-off occurs. Thus on the one hand the majority of semi-skilled workers earned under £18 a week take-home pay, even though both the machinists and the process workers constituted only the best-paid third of such workers in their firms and the assemblers tended to have seniority and relatively long service with their firm.[114] On the other hand the craftsmen and setters had a third or more of their number earning over £21 per week and less than a third earning under £18, and their levels of pay clearly overlapped with those of their foremen.[115] It is also evident that the craftsmen (though not the setters) occupied a craft labour market which invited movement in search of both wage and non-wage advantages characteristic of skilled employment: they had very predominantly kept to craft jobs in their previous work experience; they were quite likely to have seriously considered moving jobs; and they clearly assessed both the wage and non-wage advantages and disadvantages of alternative employers within the confines of the skilled labour market; beside often being involved in branch trade unionism which relates to the craft labour market.[116]

However, Goldthorpe and his colleagues counter any emergent emphasis upon the distinctive market and work situations of the skilled and semi-skilled workers by emphasising the range of choice enjoyed by the latter. Thus, while they acknowledge that "the craftsmen would have far better chances than the semi-skilled men of being able to match their high earnings elsewhere -- just as they would have much better chances than the setters of finding other work at the same skill level", they also argue that:

> "it cannot simply be assumed that workers whose attachments to their present jobs is very largely economic have in effect little alternative to making do with this, as it were, 'inferior' form of job satisfaction -- that they are constrained to take jobs of the kind in question because they lack the ability or skills to secure employment which would offer them some more desirable balance of intrinsic and extrinsic returns. Such an assumption would certainly not be a generally valid one for the semi-skilled workers in the sample we studied."[117]

In many respects this is the crucial claim in the 'industrial' monograph. The authors imply that an extreme instrumentalism, rather than a fairly distinctive labour market niche, sets these workers apart from the skilled workers, drawing on such evidence as (i) the wide range of previous work experience, among the machinists and assemblers in particular; (ii) their preferences for past jobs in terms of 'intrinsic rewards', but present jobs in terms of cash; and (iii) their limited concern with finding an alternative job. However, against this interpretation of the material, it is necessary to insist that the evidence available points to such relatively distinct labour markets. Firstly, as Blackburn and Mann have pointed out, the more 'instrumental' machinists and assemblers still enjoy less affluence than the craftsmen and setters. Their choice "to abandon employments which could offer them some greater degree of intrinsic reward in favour of work which enables them to achieve a higher level of economic return" does not appear to have allowed them to surpass the skilled worker, despite their apparent movement through higher reaches of the job market.[118] Secondly, the meaning of white-collar employment in terms of the scope for choice needs to be viewed with caution; a point noted in another context by Goldthorpe and company, when they comment on such jobs as "a brief white-collar interlude", or as jobs of "a low-paying type" held by men "not equiped to reach the higher income levels of the white-collar hierarchy."[119] In this context the authors also acknowledge the centrality of pressures arising out of home and family

commitments at the time of the life cycle occupied by their 'affluent' sample ("I liked being a waiter. It's a single man's job, of course" said one of the men), but this once more undermines their celebration of choice in the labour market.[120] Thirdly, though the sample as a whole was selected to have minimal experience of unemployment, it remained true that nineteen per cent of the machinists and assemblers had experienced more than simply transitional unemployment (with six per cent being out of work for more than three months), whilst only two per cent of the craftsmen had experienced more than transitional unemployment.[121] Finally, though <u>within these constraints</u> the cash nexus appears central to the movement of these semi-skilled workers from past to present jobs, even for them the instrumental calculus and its binding force should not be oversimplified: "taking the semi-skilled workers as a whole, those who do not mention pay at all prove in this case to be no more likely /and no less A.E./ than the rest to feel that their present firms offer them some special attraction".[122] In these circumstances it would appear quite appropriate to read the preferences of the semi-skilled workers, for past and for present jobs, in the context of substantial constraint rather than primarily in terms of extreme instrumentalism, despite the repudiation of such an interpretation by the Cambridge team. This in turn would underline the internal differentiation of the Luton sample between skilled and semi-skilled workers, and re-pose the question of the distinctiveness and unique significance of the manual/non-manual divide, raised in the previous chapter (and apropos of this, it is difficult to see the patterns of sociability of the craftsmen which are reported in this volume as clearly closer to those of the semi-skilled workers than to those of the clerks[123]).

What I have sought to do above is to recover the complexity of the occupational structure which has to be understood <u>analytically</u> in any class analysis, and to suggest that that complexity has not been adequately addressed by Goldthorpe et al, but rather glossed over by the deployment of their ideal types. At the same time as they deploy the sophisticated distinctions of market situation and social class to demarcate clerical from manual work, they resort to a literal typification of wage labour to gloss over the distinctions among manual wage workers. I will now turn my attention to some of the ramifications of the employment relations entered into by these workers, of which the labour markets they move through are just one moment. Here it is evident that the <u>Affluent Worker</u> analysts <u>can</u> grasp some of the open-endedness and conflict potential associated with skilled labour, through attention to the

'intrinsic' satisfactions sought in work. Though the analysis tends to be rather static because of the market-choice framework, it nevertheless furnishes some insights into the contestation of managerial expertise and control among craftsmen within a craft ethos, and also the rather subdued bargaining of the setters in the context of the dependency, exertion and (mildly bureaucratic?) loyalty defined by their internal promotion positions; insights which could be linked to the distinctive patterns of attitudes towards trade unions and employers of the two groups.[124] Thus they report, for example, that "the main emphasis in the craftsmen's replies [to questions about desired job changes] was, in effect, on changes which would, in their view, lead to greater efficiency, and which would at the same time increase their own involvement in, and control over, the work processes with which they were concerned"; though from the accompanying quotations this does not quite capture the tone in which the craftsmen imply that craft initiative and autonomy must surely be the prerequisite of any worthwhile craft labour.[125]

However, the dynamic of social relations within the work process remains much more obscure in the treatment of those semi-skilled workers who they regard as having devalued work deprivations as part of their cash nexus based attachment. This was evident in Goldthorpe's articles on the Vauxhall assemblers, which had to be combed for even the sparse references to effort bargaining and job control discussed in the previous section; and the 'industrial monograph' does not really add to that account, or provide any more substantial discussion of the machinists or process workers in these terms. Certainly little in this regard emerges from the considerable but "impressionistic" "observational work" reported in the introduction to the study, apart from a significant footnote which focusses on the machinists.[126] It deserves quotation in full:

> "in the case of both the heavy grinders and turret-lathe operators, management was anxious to establish the practice that men should move quite often. Heavy grinders might be moved as often as once a week. With the turret-lathe operators, changes occurred less frequently but about half the men in the departments we studied, who had no good reason for staying on the same machine, were likely to be moved every few weeks. It is interesting to note, as a possible indication of the lack of group solidarity among the machinists generally, that so far as we could ascertain there were no well-enforced group norms of output or earnings. In the case of the automatic-lathe operators there was virtually no scope for control of output once the machines were running; most men had a 'target' for the day but would exceed this if their machine proved capable of it. The heavy grinders and the turret-lathe operators had far more autonomy in this respect but acted in several different ways. About half of those we interviewed had an earnings norm, a 'bogey' for the day, which they did not usually exceed; once they were in sight of this — once they 'had the job in the bag' — they

> slowed down their rate of working. A further third, however, had a 'bogey' of this kind which they used simply as a basis for calculating at what rate they would have to work on any given job in order to 'make out'; if they found they could exceed this rate, then they would do so. The remaining men some days adopted one system, some days the other, depending chiefly, it appeared, on whether they thought the rate for the jobs they were given were 'tight' or 'loose'. Overall it could not be said that among these workers what Lupton has called 'the will to control' was very strong.[127]

While Goldthorpe et al interpret this pattern in terms of a minimal concern with job control, comparable in form if not in motivation with that documented by Lupton in the waterproof-garment industry, it might also be thought to manifest a fair degree of conventional regulation of work levels in response to variations in piece-rates, especially in view of sophisticated management redeployment tactics.[128] Not only did seventy per cent of those who had some control of pace adopt explicit tactics of workpace regulation, but the machinists were much more prone than other occupational groupings to take a conflictual view of work study; far more often than others considered their work pace too fast; and tended to criticise supervision, tooling and the payment system itself both for the pressure it imposed and the threat to reliable earnings.[129] How this pattern of shop-floor tension and bargaining related to the more frequent repudiation of the teamwork view of management among machinists, in the context of their lesser tendency to judge the firm capable of paying higher wages and the outstanding record of job security in the firm, remains unexplored in the Affluent Worker study, however.[130]

As a final comment on the variations in occupational experience and outlook it is necessary to consider the position of the process workers. In some respects their treatment highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by Goldthorpe, Lockwood, Bechofer and Platt, since they occupy an important place in the critique of technical implications analyses without any positive alternative analysis of the social organisation of their labour emerging from that critique. Thus the Cambridge team are able to demonstrate that, contrary to technicist predictions, the process workers were less rather than more impressed then the assemblers by their employers, both in terms of their assessment of the firm 'as a firm to work for' in comparison with others, and in their willingness to subscribe to the 'teamwork' imagery of management-worker relations. Thus "in the light of these data at least, the emerging stereotypes of 'integrated' chemical workers and 'alienated' car workers are not immediately recognisable."[131] This cluster of findings, in which the characteristics of the process workers' responses play a

major role, serves as the basis for a precisely, and quite narrowly, defined critique of the technical implications theorists:

> "technology undoubtedly plays a major part in determining the pattern of immediate rewards and costs experienced by workers in performing their work-tasks and -roles within the enterprise. To this extent, we would reaffirm the importance which writers such as Woodward and Blauner give to technological factors. The point at which our findings must lead us to diverge from their position comes with their assumption that this experience of the individual, in actually carrying out his job on the shop floor, will of necessity be closely associated with his attitudes and behaviour towards the organisation which employs him"[132]

This critique is further clarified in a footnote where it is defined as an attack on the theoretical ideas embodied in the technical implications approach, rather than the empirical generalisations from which the Luton cases diverge.[133] These features very clearly emphasise the continuing reliance of the Luton team upon a technicist conception of the immediate social relations of production, to which is counterposed an attachment through the labour contract itself among instrumentally oriented workers. Unfortunately for the coherence of this critique, neither the socio-technical definition of shop-floor experience nor the character of the instrumental attachment to work is adequately explicated in the critical case of the process workers.

Turning first to the instrumental cash-nexus, two rather different emphases are discernable in the discussion in the 'industrial' monograph. Firstly, there is an emphasis on the antagonistic potential of some short-fall in the levels of wages paid by Laporte:

> "the view that wages could be higher was strongest of all among the process workers -- the men who showed the most negative attitudes towards their firm as an employer. And comments made by these men throughout their interviews indicate that this is not accidental; that is to say, the relative dissatisfaction with Laporte as an employer appears to stem in some large part from dissatisfaction with the level of pay which was offered."[134]

Secondly, however, Goldthorpe et al had provided an earlier characterisation of the process workers' effort bargain which suggested that they had accepted a trade-off between intrinsic and extrinsic satisfactions which involved slightly lower pay for less stark work deprivations:

> "it would seem that the process workers are in a 'neutral' position

> --that they are attached to their present employment less because of things positively valued than because of the absence of severe work deprivation and greviances which could lead to thoughts of quitting."[135]

This interpretation, buttressed by data on the low numbers of Laporte workers who had ever thought seriously of leaving and the absence of pay among the reasons of those who had considered leaving, was encapsulated in a quote from one of the process workers, already noted in the previous chapter:

> "'Of course, you could make more at Vauxhall,' he commented, 'but life here is just that much easier'."[136]

These contrasting interpretations of the content and character of the labour contract nexus among the Laporte workers, either as a distinctive wage/effort trade-off or as an inferior deal for instrumentalists, are noted in passing by Goldthorpe et al (though not of course in these terms), but not, in my view, adequately reconciled, when they comment:

> "the bargain which the process workers have struck with their firm is...enough to attach them firmly to their present employment; and we may also recall that these men had no very marked complaints relating to their immediate work situation. Nevertheless the feeling that their rightful economic expectations from work were not being adequately met was, it seems, sufficiently powerful to help create among them certainly more anti-employer sentiment than we find in any other group in the sample."[137]

What is obviously lacking from this unsuccessful reconciliation of contrasting accounts of the cash-nexus is any sense of the dynamics of both employer strategies and worker expectations and demands surrounding the formal labour contract, a feature which returns attention to the role of a technicist account of immediate working conditions in the Affluent Worker argument.

The crucial point I want to make in this regard concerns the very limited front upon which Goldthorpe et al criticise technicism. They do, it is true, note that, at Laporte, process production seems to involve a substantial degree of isolation rather than teamwork (over a quarter of their sample "were virtually isolated in the plant...their nearest fellow workers were generally well out of speaking range").[138] It is also clear that the company does not pay outstanding wages in this admittedly high wage area, though workers clearly believed that profit levels present no barriers (seventy per cent of their sample gave it as a reason why the firm could pay more).[139] Yet no attempt is made to explain these divergences

from the technical implications analysis, merely noting the first point, and its impact on trade union organisation, in footnoted comments, while treating wage levels as an analytical 'given'. Thus all they provide of an indication of the actual disposition and control of labour by management is the following;

> "finally, we have the process workers -- a somewhat colourless group. Their jobs, it would seem, neither entail any severe costs nor offer any great possibilities of intrinsic rewards. Process workers appear to experience less deprivation in their work than do assemblers or machinists and they have no particularly marked dissatisfactions. Yet at the same time the data indicate, on almost all counts, that this group falls clearly below the level of job satisfaction enjoyed by the craftsmen and setters."[140]

This (somewhat colourless!) account does nothing to either qualify or fill out technicist analyses of the organisation of process production, and nor does it serve to reconcile the different treatments of the instrumental cash-nexus discussed above. Perhaps attention to the manner in which management may have sought to nurture and capitalise on weak trade unionism as part of 'progressive personnel policy' may have indicated part of an answer. Perhaps the deterioration in working conditions which appears implied in their finding that thirty-eight per cent of workers preferred jobs they had earlier held at Laporte but only nine per cent would prefer alternatives now available, together with a significant experience of job insecurity, may have been significant.[141] However, for the Cambridge team their initial commitment to technical implications analysis, and their continued reliance on it for the characterisation of work situations, leaves these issues unpursued; only instrumental orientations, mediated through a rather indistinctly conceptualised labour market, are conceptualised as an analytical challenge to technicism.

What I have sought to do in this section is not merely to examine variations among the occupational groups studied at Luton, but to suggest that those variations are inadequately grasped because of the oscillations in the treatment of choice and constraint in the labour market and the superficial and static treatment of the social relations of production which characterise the neo-weberian class analysis pursued by Goldthorpe and his colleagues. In addition I have wanted to reiterate in the context of the industrial monograph two themes of my earlier discussion: firstly, the manner in which an inconsistent treatment of the labour market buttresses the focus on the manual/non-manual divide which characterises the Cambridge 'completion' of a neo-weberian class analysis and demarcatio

of class boundaries; and secondly, the role which technicist accounts of the production process play as pivots of the whole intervention within industrial sociology, even when technicism is repudiated on the narrow front of an emphasis on the impact of orientations brought to work. Thus the related limitations of Goldthorpe's treatment of the Vauxhall assembly workers, on both the labour market and effort bargaining sides of the formal labour contract, are reproduced in the more extensive discussion of the whole Luton sample, leading to an inadequate analysis of the limitations and possibilities of industrial conflict across all the occupational groups, and little attempt by the authors to locate the specific forms in which such conflict may develop in each grouping. It must be such limitations which were hinted at by Westergaard, when he noted that the account provided by Goldthorpe et al was convincing in relation to the machinists and assemblers, but "less of craftsmen and other specialist workers", while it was "inclined at critical points to overemphasise small contrasts in their data, or to under-emphasise larger ones".[142] I hope to have shown that the ways in which these features manifest themselves are symptomatic of the deeper problems in the neo-weberian framework which I pinpointed at the start of my discussion, namely an inevitably inconsistent treatment of the issue of class demarcation coupled to a technicist treatment of production relations.

Having considered the full range of occupational categories investigated by the Cambridge team I now intend to return to the debate about the Vauxhall workers, in many ways the central grouping for their analysis, to consider in some detail the issue of the disputes record of that firm and in particular the arguments developed around the strikes which occurred in the years following the interview and field research. Before turning to those questions, however, I wish to make one further comment on the 'industrial' publications of the Cambridge team, concerning the orientation they take to marxism, since it was from marxian positions that their prognosis concerning industrial disputes was criticised. The most obvious point is that marxian authors did not appear as overt targets of critique until after the specifically industrial articles and monograph had been written, so that the initial engagement with marxian arguments did not occur until the response to Blackburn's critique of Goldthorpe which was incorporated as an appendix in the 'industrial' monograph.[143] Certainly it is true that the major targets of criticism in the 'industrial' publications were, and remained, human relations and technical implications theorists; theorists who, as I

noted earlier, had dominated the sub-discipline of industrial sociology in successive phases through the post-war period. Nevertheless certain clues to a re-orientation towards marxism, perhaps coincident with its emergence from a subordinate place as a minor contributor to a radical weberianism into a position of overt competition with weberian orthodoxy, can be glimpsed in these writings, particularly in the manner in which they treat the notion of alienation. In this regard it is noteworthy that in the papers he wrote in 1965/6 Goldthorpe distinguished between Blauner's conception of technological alienation and a wider meaning which he judged to be sociologically more appropriate. Thus in the 1965 conference paper he remarked "only Chinoy comes near to understanding the term in what we would regard as its most useful and historically valid sense: that is, as a term of sociological diagnosis rather than a merely descriptive term connoting 'a general syndrome made up of a number of different objective conditions and subjective feeling-states' (Blauner)".[144] In turn the published 1966 paper was slightly more equivocal, but continued to differentiate between a narrow and a broader interpretation of the notion: "if, therefore, these workers are to be considered as 'alienated', the roots of their alienation must be sought not merely in the technological character of the plants in which they are now employed but, more fundamentally in those aspects of the wider society which generate their tremendous [sic] drive for economic advancement and their disregard [sic] for the costs of this through the impoverishment of their working lives."[145] By the time of the 'industrial' monograph there is no sign of the more extensive discussion of alienation in these terms, promissed in the earlier papers, and the critique of the Blaunerian conception of alienation is only qualified by a footnote which notes "if on the other hand [to Blauner] the term is taken as one of social diagnosis -- as in the classical Marxian tradition — then its applicability is more arguable, although at the cost of extending the discussion from the field of sociology into that of social philosophy."[146] From there, of course, it was only a short step to the juxtaposition and dismissal of both technicist and simply philosophical notions of alienation found in the final monograph, a position which I have already criticised in the previous chapter. The central issues in the controversy with marxism, prefigured in these comments, can now be addressed more directly by a consideration of the arguments surrounding the Vauxhall strikes of 1965-67. This will finally complete my reconsideration of the logic and inadequacies of the Luton research.

Industrial Conflict at Vauxhall: Competing Diagnoses of the Strike Propensity of the Past and Implications for Consciousness in the Future

In the very first Goldthorpe paper on the Vauxhall assemblers he argued that:

> "as these workers see it, they have made a bargain with their firms -- in terms of reward for effort -- which meets, better than others available to them, their present wants and aspirations relative to work. Thus they are disposed to maintain their relationship with the firm and to define this relationship more as one of reciprocity and interdependence rather than, say as one of coercion and exploitation. And this, in our opinion, is one important factor in Vauxhall's virtual immunity from strike action."[147]

However, though Goldthorpe does not discuss the other factors which contributed to the Vauxhall strike pattern, he does make clear, as we have seen, that this "nexus of some strength and functional effectiveness" would not preclude conflict of a limited type in the future.[148] Thus he noted the awareness of a "potential contrariety of their interests" among workers, both in relation to work study and, especially, wages, and concluded:

> "these workers, while well aware of what one might call the symbiotic nature of their relationship with Vauxhall, would, nonetheless, provide ready support for tough union action of a certain kind; that is, action directed unremittingly, even though 'responsibly', at pushing up the level of wages, fringe benefits and other elements in labour's share of the proceeds of the enterprise. In other words, they would be prepared to back a union policy of hard 'cash-based' bargaining."[149]

Indeed he notes in a footnote that such incipient 'business unionism' had already arrived by the time he was writing his paper, in the shape of a dispute in January 1965 about the system and rates of pay; though as Beynon and Nichols note, his presentation ignores the likelihood that the dispute arose from a lockout by the company in retaliation for a union-organised mass meeting during working hours.[150] This, then, is the background to the controversy about the strikes of the mid to late 1960s at Vauxhalls, though it should be added that the later publications (and particularly the published Goldthorpe paper) do nothing to amplify and explore these issues.[151]

Immediately following the publication of the abbreviated Goldthorpe

article, further disputes occurred at Vauxhall, this time accompanied, it would appear, by a fairly boisterous and 'oppositional' demonstration. As is well known, this prompted Robin Blackburn to cite Goldthorpe's article as symptomatic of the shallow fashion in which orthodox sociology examined the consciousness and conflict potential of wage workers, while glossing over the 'sovereignty' of capital within the production process and the open-ended and conflict-ridden character of the completion of the labour contract in production.[152] It is important to appreciate the context of Blackburn's comments: having documented some of the key patterns of social inequality in British society, and sought to suggest that their roots are to be found in the social organisation of exploitation -- in the purchase and sale of labour power, and the capitalist organisation and intensification of production -- he ends his article with a short section on 'the Vauxhall episode'. In this context he juxtaposes Goldthorpe's assessment of the calculative and cooperative involvement of the Vauxhall assemblers with what has become a well known report from The Times, concerning the temper of the October 1966 dispute:

> "Near riot conditions developed today at the Luton factory of Vauxhall motors....Two thousand workers streamed out of the factory gates and tried to storm the main offices. Dozens of police were brought in and an inspector threatened mass arrests when the crowd halted traffic for half an hour.... The scenes outside the main offices today, with men singing 'The Red Flag' and calling 'String him up' whenever a director's name was mentioned, made yesterday's demonstration outside the executive offices seem mild....Across the road hundreds of men linked arms and prevented a heavy Bedford truck from entering the factory.... When one American executive appeared at the door of the main offices some of the men mistook him for Mr Kelly (Director of Manufacturing) and tried to break through a cordon of security guards to reach him"[153]

On this basis Blackburn argues that Goldthorpe's diagnosis had been 'cruelly put to the test", and found wanting, because he "clearly overestimated the stability of both the companies' operations and the workers' consciousness in an inescapably unstable capitalist environment."[154] Spelling this out in more detail Blackburn pinpointed the ways in which both wages and working conditions were vulnerable to erosion in conditions of intensified corporate competition, while the rationale of capitalist production means that such pressures coincide with, are the means to, the augmentation of profit. In the case of Vauxhall, then, these features which he had theorised earlier in terms of 'the sociology of exploitation' were evident in terms of the remittance of profits to General Motors in the context of a four day week, and attendant reductions in earnings, and also economies in cleaning the workplace, with an attendant deterioration of working conditions.[155] On this basis he argues that an 'instrumental' attitude to work will lead to a 'volatile' consciousness:

"the workers' expectations had been aroused by a certain paternalism which characterised the worker-manager relationships in the past at Luton. Once these expectations could no longer be met the workers' rejection of paternalism is vigorous and complete.... At Luton the precarious coexistence of prosperity and exploitation, oppressive work and an increasingly sophisticated work-force set the stage for an explosion of consciousness. Such dramatic events tend to be local in character. But a certain restiveness has been evident in the British trade union movement over the last few years. The increasingly influential role of shop-stewards and the large number of unofficial strikes both point to this."[156]

At this point, before looking at the response this elicited from the Cambridge team, it is worth noting, firstly, that his comments were related to his broader account of the cash nexus and the labour contract, and secondly, that the notion of an 'explosion of consciousness' should not be read too dramatically: it involved the 'vigorous rejection of paternalism' and was 'local in character', but could be correlated with 'a certain restiveness' in the trade union movement.

Turning, then, to the response of Goldthorpe et al, they make a series of important points in just two pages. Firstly, they emphasise that Vauxhall remains relatively strike-free in comparison with other motor plants, while most of the stoppages were brief. Secondly, they emphasise the centrality of pay rather than any generalised dissatisfaction. Their crucial point here is that "whatever other issues have been raised -- working conditions, work rules, job transfers, shift-work etc. -- these have been more or less quickly revealed as primarily bargaining counters in a struggle over wage levels"[157]. This struggle was fueled by "unusual clumsiness on the part of management", but was primarily grounded in comparability comparisons with the higher earnings in the Midlands car plants on the one hand, and in the experience of unaccustomed "prolonged short-time working and fluctuating earnings" resulting from a sales slump on the other[158]. Thirdly, they pinpoint distinctive tactics adopted by the Vauxhall workforce: "although sometimes beginning with angry walk-outs and even demonstrations, disputes, if protracted, have been chiefly waged through banning overtime and working to rule"[159]. This Goldthorpe et al interpret as being well in line with their earlier diagnosis of aggressive cash-based bargaining co-existing with interdependence and cooperation, arguing that:

> "what is indicated here, then, is nothing so dramatic as 'an explosion of consciousness': rather, it would seem, one has a

> situation in which workers feel a strong sense of grievance over pay and are anxious to press their claims, but only in ways designed to cause the minimum loss of earnings. Closure of the plant until the men are prepared to resume normal working is, of course, the obvious counter-tactic for management to adopt."[160]

For the Cambridge team, then, both the objectives and tactics of the workers at Vauxhall reaffirm the narrowly cash-focussed character of their militancy and trade-unionism; though this emphasis on the predominant direction of activity does not fully address the significance of the ephemeral walk-outs and demonstrations emphasised by Blackburn, and nor does it explain the manner in which work-rules, job transfers and the like come simply to be used as bargaining counters. Indeed this latter claim appears to be rather similar to that which the authors themselves scathingly dismiss in the final volume of the Affluent Worker series, when they castigate H.A. Turner and his colleagues as perverse for arguing that "widespread complaints by workers of monotony and so on might be better understood as a bargaining tactic".[161] Most crucially, the account offered by Goldthorpe et al raises the questions why management should behave in the way that they did, "with unusual clumsiness" and also with a ready resort to 'lock-out' tactics, and how might workers respond to such actions? It is these features, as much as anything, which Blackburn's commentary highlights, but which Goldthorpe and his colleagues do not adequately address in their response. Once more the failure to theorise the dynamics of management strategy, and the treatment of the labour contract simply as a formal cash transaction, characterise the perspectives of the Affluent Worker team.

At the same time, however, Blackburn's analysis is not without its difficulties; particularly in regard to an 'inevitabilist' reading of his argument, which not only implies an automatic escalation of radicalism but also appears to treat 'normal' consciousness as simply false. Some of these difficulties can be seen in the different emphases in Blackburn's own discussion, but they are dramatised by the manner in which the argument has been adapted by other authors. Thus, while Westergaard has incorporated Blackburn's points in his own wider marxisant critique of the Luton study in such a way as to emphasise a potential and incipient but also contradictory and incomplete oppositional consciousness, some rather more florid and dubious interpretations have also been advanced by some marxists. An extreme case is provided by Gorz, who claimed (without any real evidence so far as I am aware!) that Goldthorpe's

report itself sparked the October 1966 demonstration, which was said to involve "wild rioting....groups attempted to storm the offices and battled the police which had been called to protect them."[162] On this basis he portrays a dramatic switch, from an individualised resignation which repressed 'qualitative' demands to a collective mobilisation which articulated those demands, but he also traces the obstacles to their continuing articulation arising from the bureaucratisation of trade unions and the institutionalisation of conflict.[163] Gorz is clearly guilty of both misrepresenting and over-interpreting the Vauxhall episode, and in the light of the events of May 1968 he appears to see the seeds of a major political mobilisation in every rank and file initiative.[164] In these senses his account is indicative of some of the dangers inherent in Blackburn's conceptualisation. At the same time, though he does not develop his account of the limits and possibilities of trade union organisation and struggle very far, he does direct valuable attention to the significance of the institutionalised labour movement within which parochial rebellions and incidents of industrial confrontation occur.

These two features, the post-1968 interpretations of 'explosions of consciousness' and the focussing of attention on the role of the institutionalised labour movement, are the major points of reference for the final interpretation of the Vauxhall disputes which I wish to consider, that offerred by Michael Mann.[165] His discussion of 'explosions of consciousness' provides a substantial clarification of the issues at stake; and will also serve to indicate some of the general themes of his analysis of working class consciousness, which will be returned to briefly in the following chapter. Mann advances arguments about the character of 'normal' consciousness, about the generally ephemeral nature of radicalised consciousness, and about the impact of the institutional matrix within which disputes occur, all of which qualify the Blackburn position but without simply returning to the stance of Goldthorpe et al.. I will consider each of these points in turn.

The first criticism which Mann directs at Blackburn concerns the overdrawn contrast which he implies between superficial, 'normal', consciousness and the awareness which emerges in struggle. He couches this argument in the following terms:

> "Blackburn .... claims that the [Luton] survey, thorough as it was, could not predict the explosion of a subsequent strike because surveys must necessarily reflect mere actual consciousness. If he had read

the study thoroughly, however, he would have noticed that the survey does reflect dynamic tensions of dual consciousness. Though the workers surveyed had mainly harmonistic views of industry, they were also conscious of elements of 'coercion and exploitation' in their employment relationship. If these came to the fore, more conflictual industrial relations could develop. In fact, from surveys we can easily perceive 'latent' consciousness of class, which, in certain situations, can explode."[166]

Such a critique has some force because it re-poses the question touched on in my earlier discussion of 'false consciousness', namely the incompatability between a materialist analysis of consciousness and a conception of a totally 'false' consciousness. Nevertheless, it does less than justice to Blackburn's argument, in at least two respects. The first, and less important, respect is that the original argument was a critique of Goldthorpe's published article, which, as I have already noted, gave a most limited indication of the contradictory aspects of the Vauxhall workers' consciousness and strongly argued that awareness of conflict was 'contained' within a durable attachment to the firm. Mann's comments appear to read back the more (though problematically) open-ended final Affluent Worker report against a characterisation which pre-dated it. Secondly, and more critically, Blackburn did not simply argue that "'bourgeois' empirical sociology" fails because "surveys must necessarily reflect mere actual consciousness" (though Gorz comes closer to such a position); rather he argues that Goldthorpe's analytical framework fails to grasp both the sources of instability in the relationship between labour and capital, and the ways in which an instrumental consciousness can become 'volatile' in that context. Despite these inadequacies of his own criticisms at this point, Mann's intervention nevertheless serves to underline the importance of an adequate characterisation of the patterns of 'actual consciousness' which serve as points of departure for any 'explosion'. Together, the arguments of Blackburn and of Mann indicate both the indispensability and the slipperiness of the notion of 'false consciousness'.

The second theme of Mann's discussion addresses the precise character of the forms of consciousness associated with disputes and demonstrations. Firstly he concedes that:

> "there is at least surface plausibility to the 'explosion' thesis. It has often been observed that management-worker conflicts which appear to be conducted in rather confused terms bring to the surface

> generalised worker discontents which had hitherto escaped notice. This is most evident when the company concerned had previously been stable and paternalist, for in such cases the workers appear to have switched suddenly from deference to class consciousness. However institutionalised industrial relations become, strikes reveal the workers' pent-up feelings, deprivations and hostility to the employer."[167]

This characterisation comes close to that of Blackburn, but Mann qualifies it in two major respects: firstly by an emphasis on the limitations as well as the 'advances' involved in such conflict consciousness; and secondly by the suggestion that the 'switch' may not be permanent but may be reversed. In this connection he documents the limits of striker radicalisation, at least in the British case, by pointing to the ritualised and restricted character of confrontations ("how can 'dozens' of police-men hold back 'thousands' of workers?" he asks); and, again in the British case, he suggests that sentiments of brotherhood and solidarity are accompanied by regrets at having to resort to strike action but are not harnessed to a commitment to radically transform society.[168] Such points are not explicitly contradicted by Blackburn, and may be compatible with Westergaard's emphasis upon an "ideology at half-cock", but certainly undermine any conception of the rapid and inevitable escalation of radicalism. In addition Mann's emphasis on the varied prospects of cumulative radicalisation, ranging from low in the United States and Britain, through medium in Belgium, to high in Italy and France, challenges the identification of all manifestations of rank and file militancy as equivalent in this respect; an equivalence which is an explicit feature of Gorz's argument. However, it should be remembered that Blackburn identified nothing more dramatic than 'a certain restiveness' and 'the increasingly influential role of the shop stewards' as the broader and more diffuse accompaniments of 'dramatic' local events, at least in the British context. These varied emphases shift attention to the third major theme developed by Mann, that the trajectory of any explosion' of consciousness depends crucially upon the institutions and dynamics of collective bargaining.

In regard to this final theme, which constitutes the kernal of Mann's wider argument as well as the nub of his critical comments on Blackburn, he argues that the non-cumulation of radicalism in the British case stems from the demonstrative and tactical role of strikes and worker mobilisation. This is a consequence of the local processing and settlement of greviances and is embodied in the outlook of worker representatives:

> "they view the turbulence [of demonstrations] tactically, as convincing management that they are desperately holding back the workers from excessive violence. Once management has given in to their specific bargaining demands they will see no further point to the agitation."[169]

From this point of view, shared alike it would seem by both Mann and the union officials, the winning of concessions leaves any 'switches' of consciousness in limbo:

> "it is the expansion of a consciousness which is 'free-floating', which does not affect action and which must necessarily subside again. In this setting, 'explosion' is an apt metaphor -- it bangs but it cannot build."[170]

This assessment, coupled with an emphasis on the 'oppositional' but not 'alternative' content of such consciousness, furnishes the basis for a final judgement that "surges of class consciousness are continually undercut by economism and capitalism survives."[171] I will return to the broader arguments and comparisons which buttress this assessment in the next chapter, but for the present I wish to pose two sorts of queries: the first about the conditions which sustain, or subvert, economism; and the second about the schematic treatment of alternative aspects of consciousness. On the first issue it would appear that the differing assessments of the continuing (even perpetual) efficacy of wage-oriented bargaining, offered by Blackburn, Westergaard, Goldthorpe et al and Mann, hinge on different assumptions about both the capacity for concession-making on the employers side and the willingness of workers to treat non-wage demands as merely tactical pressure points. In this regard Mann appears to regard 'mature' capitalism as characterised by a continuing capacity for economic concession-making, sufficient to reward and sustain worker economism; though he also deploys a subsidiary argument that crises which would undermine such a capacity would at the same time stimulate profound divisions within the working class which would also be sufficient to demobilise radicalisation.[172] By way of comparison the Affluent Worker team both eschew any assessment of the dependability of of the conditions of economistic bargaining and imply, in the final pages of their final volume, that participation demands could be stimulated beyond the bounds envisaged as likely by Mann. Thus Mann's treatment is more complete and coherent than that of Goldthorpe et al in formal terms, but it remains both schematic and inadequately grounded in any analysis of the dynamics of capital accumulation. The second query mentioned above concerns the adequacy of the contrast between an escalating series of

explosions of consciousness culminating in an inevitable revolutionary insurrection on one hand, and a perpetual short-circuiting of the froth of superfluous solidarity on the other. While marxist analyses inspired by the inevitablism of the Communist Manifesto give some credence to such a contrast, it seems to govern Mann's discussion even more than it does that of the authors he criticises. As a result little attention is given to the possibility that even 'modest' explosions may leave residues of somewhat radicalised or even just more 'bloody-minded' consciousness, taking a variety of political and sub-political forms, but nevertheless altering the temper and tempo of both trade unionism and political life. In the Vauxhall context such a possibility raises questions about two particular features of the Luton research design: the selection of a 'turnip patch' lacking long traditions of, for want of a better term, 'solidaristic Labourism'; and the concentration of the sample on younger married workers with little experience of unemployment, excluding both older workers whose political formation lay in the pre-war period, and younger workers less pressured towards an economistic accomodation. In relation to the first feature it might be supposed that such circumstances would facilitate both rather unpredicatable rebellions and their mainly transient character, though much more would need to be known about the role of those labour institutions and leaders which did operate in the Vauxhall context. In regard to the second feature, it must be of major significance in complicating any extrapolation from the data of Goldthorpe et al to the sentiments and politics of the wider Vauxhall workforce, particularly with regard to the longer-term but lower-key ramifications of the experiences of mobilisation and lock-outs.

In conclusion, then, the 'debate' about the escalation of consciousness in the course of industrial conflict, prompted in part by the Vauxhall strikes of 1965-67, has moved a considerable distance from the terms of the Affluent Worker, to give a much more central place to the dynamics of collective bargaining and to give more (though still contested) credence to the demands advanced in the heat of collective mobilisation. However, even the best of the sceptical interventions in the debate, that of Mann, relies on extremely schematic treatments of the limits and possibilities of conciliatory bargaining and of the dynamics of class consciousness, while the alternative marxian accounts remain fairly rudimentary and slip towards an 'over-optimistic' view of transformations of consciousness and action. At this point I want to return specifically to the Vauxhall case, to review additional published material which, though it is not

sharply focussed on the specific issue of collective mobilisation and worker consciousness, points up some of the inadequacies of both Goldthorpe's 'narrow' interpretation of cash bargaining and Mann's schematic treatment of such bargaining, but also pinpoints some of the themes which any more developed marxian analysis than that provided by Blackburn would have to consider in more depth. This will involve first, a brief review of the definitive analysis of variations in industrial conflict within the British motor industry between the mid-1940s and the mid-'60s, that of H.A. Turner et al; and second, an even briefer look at some journalistic comments on industrial relations at Vauxhall in the '50s and '60s.[173]

One of the main themes which has emerged from the above discussion has been that the significance of these much discussed episodes of industrial conflict, and their impact upon workers' perspectives, can only be properly assessed in the context of a fuller understanding of the pattern of development of management-worker relations at Vauxhall. The few pointers which are available without fresh original research can only be suggestive but they do support an important theme. They suggest the central importance of co-optive and relatively 'soft' management policies in sustaining the low level of overt conflict in the '50s, and they imply that the increasingly conflict-prone pattern of the 1960s was connected with tougher management policies, not only on the wages front but in the organisation and control of the production process also, which threatened the credibility of established institutions of management-worker consultation and negotiation and introduced new themes in worker consciousness.

The most valuable indications of these patterns and developments are provided by Turner, Clack and Roberts, in their 'industrial relations' study which was under way at the same time as the Luton investigation, and from the same institutional base -- the Department of Applied Economics at Cambridge -- but with a very different disciplinary research and explanatory framework. They give special attention to the exceptionally peaceful industrial relations record of Vauxhalls, from the end of the war until the mid '60s, but they also note that "during the 1960s this firm has been becoming statistically rather more normal, and its (still few) stoppages have been somewhat larger and more intractable."[174] Among the features which have been proposed as influences upon Vauxhall's 'deviant' industrial relations pattern they focus upon two. The first is management initiatives which appear to have been guided by a

conciliatory paternalism, including the instigation of the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) and later the implementation of a steward-based grievance procedure which "encouraged direct relations with the shop-steward system to develop in an integrated way with the official union organisation."[175] The second is the relatively incomplete degree of union organisation before 1963 and the recognition of only two unions (AEU and NUVB) for negotiation purposes, which "combined with Vauxhall's effective domination of its industrial locale to enable it to develop an unusually close relationship with the district union officials."[176] Turner and his colleagues are reluctant to assign critical significance to these features of institutionalised conflict regulation, largely on the grounds that the other fairly sizeable relatively 'peaceful' car plant — Rolls Royce — does not exhibit either of these features. Nevertheless they appear to remain rather impressed by the "general sophistication of Vauxhall's treatment of labour problems, and an attitude of going out to meet and anticipate new developments in the labour field, rather than resisting them until forced to accept."[177] At various points they cite the following developments as examples of such a strategy:

(i) the formalisation of joint consultation through the MAC;[178]

(ii) the development of procedures which incorporated shop-floor representatives in grading appeals, accompanied by a 'conservative' policy on job moves which impinged on the grouping and grading system (and note "like other firms Vauxhall moves men between jobs as the work situation demands, but the grouping and grading system acts as a disincentive to casual transfers of labour");[179]

(iii) the provision of facilities for steward organisation in recent years, about which they remark that "Vauxhall -- characteristically again -- has provided its Luton works committee with an office and desk, but this is currently [1967] quite exceptional";[180] and

(iv) the development of time rates, accompanied by a grading system and merit payments, in the context of increasing automation and machine pacing.

On the latter point they write that:

> "during the 1950's management became concerned about the impact on its wage structure [then payment by results] of the adoption of automatic equipment which made jobs machine paced....the firm was sure that the outcome would be an overwhelming pressure for 'lieu' bonusses in compensation, which it feared would import anomalies into the plant wage structure. Accordingly the management decided to change to straight time-rates, before a large new plant was opened in 1957...the management emphasised that time-rates would cut out losses of earnings

due to breakdowns and the like, and would bring a new element of stability into the workers' incomes."[181] In addition to these features, and of some significance in view of the impact of job insecurity upon most car plants documented elsewhere in the study, Turner et al also note that "Vauxhall also had, at least until very recently, a guaranteed week agreement superior to that for engineering in general", though unfortunately they[182] do not discuss the firm's record in relation to job security systematically.

It is both appropriate and necessary to interject here some comments on the general analytical framework within which Turner and his colleagues review the Vauxhall experience and highlight the above features of management and industrial relations at the Luton plant. Their basic research strategy involves comparisons of the circumstances surrounding the substantially varied industrial relations records of the different UK motor firms. This approach, in contrast to Goldthorpe's presentation of a single case as 'deviant' from the normal pattern, emphasises the heterogeneity of experience within the industry, and does so in such a way as to challenge the very presumption that there was a dominant modal pattern. Their comparative approach thrives on the normality of variation and on that basis disparages explanations of industrial conflict which appeal directly to common features of employment across the motor industry. In particular they argue that:

> "however such concentrations of discontent are interpreted, they do not well support the assertion that it is assembly-line work as such which contributes significantly to strike-causation in the motor industry. While if the general technique of car production were of major importance in determining the industry's high strike liability, it would also be difficult to explain the very unequal distribution of stoppages between plants with almost identical methods of production, or the fact that the automobile industry is not relatively strike-prone in most other countries where it is important -- or the comparative recency of the British industry's own high strike-propensity"; and "the British car firms, for all their comparative technical uniformity, have displayed a very wide variation in their respective experiences of labour unrest.....there seems nothing, therefore, in the technology of car production which especially predisposes the motor industry to irascible human relationships."[183]

In this way comparison of the varied and changing record of industrial strife of different motor firms underpins a critique of simplistic explanations of conflict as direct consequences of technical or economic features of car production; a critique rather broader in scope than that mounted by Goldthorpe and colleagues. More positively, the comparisons

developed by these Cambridge authors direct attention away from such features and towards those institutions of collective bargaining which vary from firm to firm and even plant to plant, and which, thus, constitute the proximate explanations for varied strike levels and patterns. Thus, though Turner is something of a maverick within the industrial relations tradition, the study focusses very clearly on those institutions of job regulation which have been the central concern of that tradition, though not in such abstracted fashion as some exponents. It is in this context, of detailed attention to bargaining institutions, and particularly concern for their widespread 'inadequacy' and 'obsolescence', that the specific features of Vauxhall's collective bargaining machinery, outlined above, assume key significance in the explanation of Vauxhall's 'peaceful' past.[184]

It is evident that Goldthorpe et al and Turner share some common ground in their criticism of any assumed direct connection between production techniques and industrial relations. They also share an appreciation of the manner in which labour market processes are likely to have underlined the calculative commitment of car workers to their employment and employer. Thus Turner et al note that the car firms:

> "recruit very few workers as juveniles, but take on adult labour from a variety of other occupations. Many of these do not involve the restraints and limitations of mass production work, so it seems reasonable to suppose that car workers accept these things quite consciously as one price for the high wages that draw them into the industry. On the other hand, their previous work experience limits their sense of 'committal' to the industry: they know they can do other jobs, and have some personal familiarity with the market for labour."[185]

Even here there are differences of emphasis, for Turner et al portray these features as fairly general across the industry rather than peculiar to Luton, and also allow that such calculative commitment does not expunge counter-control strategies and demands. However, beyond this their approaches are markedly divergent. Firstly, having established that common underlying features of car-work must be mediated in their impact upon industrial relations, Turner et al focus upon management policies, union organisation and their joint institutions of collective bargaining as the key mediators; and in line with their characterisation of the labour market they treat the 'instrumentalism' of car workers as itself something of a common denominator. Secondly, their discussion of background or underlying features gives pre-eminence to such major economic circum-

stances as the cyclical pattern of demand for the product with the attendant job insecurity and fluctuations in real earnings, and 'full employment', as a context for shop-floor bargaining and firms' wage policies; while suggesting that technical features have little explanatory significance, even as background features.

Their assessment of the role of technique is underpinned by the following judgement:

> "Assembly-line work in the car factories is comprehensible and meaningful, and not all without variety....track work is less boring, repetitive, meaningless and lonely than many other kinds of factory work -- textile spinning or 'machine minding' for example."[186]

This general impressionistic judgement is buttressed in turn by a variety of more specific arguments:

(i) there are significant variations in pace and fragmentation of assembly-line work consequent upon distinctive manning and administrative policies;

(ii) car-workers have sometimes expressed a preference for track-work when it has been accompanied by positive wage differentials;

(iii) the citation of 'monotony' and 'speed-up' by track-workers must be suspect as mere bargaining rhetoric, fueled indeed by academic discussions of track work; and

(iv) assembly-line workers do not constitute the only or even the predominant shop-floor participants in industrial conflict within car plants;[187] while

(v) technical changes such as the introduction of transfer machines appear to have changed work experience only slightly, and that for the better, reducing tension and monotony.[188]

Each of these arguments raises real issues, though in the context of the discussion by Turner, Clack and Roberts they appear as a rather random assortment of cudgels with which to beat an unspecified but crude technical implications opponent. This appearance is reinforced by the contradictory emphases of the differing points: for example, the emphasis on a uniformly benign work situation coexists with acknowledgement of variations in the pace and fragmentation of work, while the accusations of mere rhetoric coexist with an argument that cash compensations override work deprivations reminiscent of Goldthorpe's account. In these circumstances it is not surprising to find that Goldthorpe and his colleagues display considerable exasperation with the tone and content of these arguments, especially as Turner et al also appear to tease them by querying the significance of generalisations about work conditions based on attitude surveys from

diverse social milieu, only to put the issue to one side.[189] As I have already noted Goldthorpe et al reassert that track-work is characterised by pace and monotony, and that, therefore, bargaining rhetoric articulates genuine grievances related to real deprivations -- though they themselves are more equivocal in the context of their response to Blackburn.

However, despite the deficiencies of the Turner account, the basic problem raised by these arguments is not adequately confronted by Goldthorpe et al, either in their admittedly brief response to that account or in the body of their work. This concerns, once again, the inadequacy of an ideal-typical characterisation of socio-technical circumstances, as a resume of the fundamental and significant features of work experience abstracted from wider social relations. Adherence to such an inventory as the core of their characterisation of the immediate work situation, without the development of any substantial account of the social relations within which such features are located, must help to explain, for example, their inadequate consideration of the distinctive patterns of job insecurity and wage instability that have typified the British motor industry (and which Turner et al regard, quite correctly, as fundamental determinants of industrial relations in the car plants); but against which typical pattern, Vauxhall appears significantly 'deviant'.[190]

Though Goldthorpe et al do not offer a satisfactory alternative, the analyses developed by Turner et al are clearly not without difficulties or faults. In particular they tend to claim the insignificance of technique and of the immediate work situation on the basis of evidence that technology as such has no coherent <u>independent</u> effect. This form of argument, which rests upon the segregation of discussion of the impact of technique from assessment of the impact of economic exigencies and managerial policies, is clearly inadequate except in relation to the refutation of a direct and mono-causal technical determinism. Outside that specific debating context the sorts of points listed above hardly demonstrate the insignificance of immediate work experience, or even the technical substrate of that experience. Rather they invite an analysis of the manner in which distinctive strategies of production organisation -- including manning practices, techniques of production, the administration of commands and controls, and consultation and bargaining relations -- emerge in the development of relations between employers and workers, circumscribed as those relations are by both economic exigencies and political conditions which express the relations between capital and labour more generally. One way in which Turner et al avoid any extensive analysis along these

lines, so that their argument tends to elevate the account of bargaining institutions into a self-sufficient sphere of explanation, is by their spurious separation of technical and bargained aspects of the work situation, and their presumption of uniform technical circumstances throughout the industry. Another aspect of their discussion which curtails attention to underlying relationships, and focusses attention upon 'obsolescent institutions', is their characterisation of the 'technical bias' of managements, "who have sometimes been impatient of the human paraphernalia of production and inclined to regard the workplace union organisation in particular as a challenge to their authority and competence", without attempting to locate this except as an accident of history and personality.[191] A key example of their tendency to segregate technical and bargained features of employment occurs in their discussion of the rigours of track work:

> "then there are the demands of continuous attention and constant pacing. It is significant that when car workers complain about their jobs, it is often of 'speed-up' -- i.e. of changes in the pacing of work because of a greater load, non-standard parts, fewer men, more inconvenient working conditions, or the breaking up of experienced working gangs or teams. A sense of 'speed up', real or imaginery, is inseperable from repeated adjustments required by the many -- indeed, almost weekly -- changes and modifications of jobs and components which are suffered by most popular models throughout their production lives. And its conversion to a complaint is again a normal part of the workplace 'effort bargaining' ritual. It is the changes which produce grounds for argument and negotiation rather than the normal pace of track-work itself. Stresses may sometimes be produced by occasional demands for peak production from management, or managerial 'quality drives'; but these things are often again regarded as a unilateral change in the terms of the 'effort bargain'. As for mental attention, many of the operations are neither intricate or complex enough to prevent daydreaming. Some jobs -- with the connivance of supply departments -- allow trackmen to build up 'banks' of particular sub-assemblies, thus freeing a period for uninterrupted fantasy, a brief spell with a newspaper in the 'works library', or more gregarious activity."[192]

Of course, patterns of pace and tedium are most readily contested at times when working arrangements are undergoing a change, but the contrast between such changes in arrangements and the 'normal pace of track-work' is not as clear-cut as this passage implies. While the tension of machine pacing at a given pace and the pressures of 'speed-up' are not simple reciprocals, the process of 'speed-up' itself entails the reduction of scope for mitigating the rigours of machine pacing. In addition the stresses produced by 'quality drives' and the like are regarded as impinging upon established effort bargains, but this makes the technical context of such initiatives no less real and relevant to such bargains.

Similarly the 'sense of speed up' cannot be regarded as an artifact because it is nurtured by occasional initiatives on the part of management, since such initiatives may underline a central concern and tendency of management policy without, in the context of a well organised shop-floor unionism, achieving any marked change in work pace or pressure. As Turner et al themselves emphasise, the dramatic technical and organisational changes were made in the motor industry during the inter-war period, in a context of very limited shop-floor bargaining power, but the post-war period has continued to see perpetual skirmishing over the specific forms of implementation and operation of those now established technologies and processes.[193] Finally it should be noted that these authors also recognise the complex interplay of managerial control strategies and the implementation of semi-automated production in more recent years; though once more they tend to tilt at a naive technologism as a way of minimising the significance of the social and technical transformation of production which is involved, and at the same time themselves provide a rather technicist account of such semi-automation which glosses over the manner in which 'responsibilities', 'skills' and 'tensions' are themselves embedded in social relations rather than being produced by the new technology per se.[194]

Returning now to the implications of these points for the general diagnosis offered by the Cambridge 'industrial relations team', there are two which I wish to emphasise. The first is that a comparative analysis of the motor industry cannot proceed on the basis of an assumption of tecnological uniformity which, when confronted with variations in industrial conflict, is taken to signify the irrelevance or at best background relevance of the immediate social and technical organisation of production. Rather, the varied conformations of immediate work experience (which are only partially delimited by varieties of technique) must be integrated into the comparative analysis, alongside the subtle discrimination of varieties of bargaining institutions. Thus, for example, it is evident that Vauxhall and Rolls-Royce -- the relatively 'peaceful' car plants in the 1950s -- do not differ only in their industrial relations institutions but also in their adoption and implementation of mass production techniques. The authors recognise this but seem reluctant to appreciate its significance for their research strategy and conceptualisation.[195] While they escape from the abstracted analysis of institutions of job regulation, which has characterised some 'industrial relations' theorising, by focussing clearly on the vicissitudes of the labour <u>market</u>, they continue

to abstract from the vicissitudes of the labour process.

The second implication follows from this, namely that a more detailed examination of the actual terms of the day-to-day implementation of the labour contract on the shop-floor would complement and locate the analysis of bargaining institutions and labour market relations undertaken by Turner et al. Certainly it would seem likely that such an examination would strengthen and extend their analysis of the development of notions of 'job property rights' among car workers, which they sketch in the following terms:

> "it also includes the idea of rights to a particular job at a particular place, and may extend to the right to consultation in anything which may affect the future value of his 'property'. Managements, for instance, often find difficulty in understanding resistance to the introduction of additional workers in a section or to transfers of labour from department to department; but this arises from a failure to appreciate that jobs which are similarly paid are nevertheless not necessarily of equal value to their incumbents; they may carry different opportunities of overtime or promotion, different degrees of interest or of independence and freedom from supervision -- or simply the special values that come from familiarity and accustomed personal relationships."[196]

The dynamics of such 'job-property-rights' demands clearly need to be understood in relation to the day-to-day experience of the social organisation of production among workers in the car industry; but the ways in which they are embedded in experience of the transformations in technique and managerial control which have characterised the industry, and relate to workers own counter-control strategies, are hardly discussed. Thus the manner in which they interplay with the escalation in wage aspirations, also documented by Turner et al, remains obscure.[197]

The strengths of the Turner, Clack and Roberts approach, both in the wider comparisons and in the specific discussion of Vauxhall, are, then, attention to the advance of workers' aspirations under conditions of 'full employment', coupled with sophisticated analysis of the character of bargaining institutions and an emphasis upon the differential and fluctuating, but major, impact of job insecurity. The central weakness of their approach is a tendency to substitute the bashing of technical determinism for any developed analysis of transformations and struggles surrounding the immediate social organisation of production. Thus their

sketch of the substance of Vauxhall's sophisticated paternalism, and its transmutation in the face of union organisation from paternalistic consultation to conciliatory local negotiation, needs to be complemented by attention to the manner in which the social organisation of production itself was managed. Such an account of the organisational and technical initiatives of management on the shop floor, and the ways in which they ramify into bargaining and constraint of work routines and work effort, might not only complement their account of the 'deviant' bargaining institutions and personnel policy of that firm, but also suggest reasons why it was becoming less 'deviant' in its disputes record during the 1960s. Of course, an adequate account of this sort could only be developed on the basis of detailed investigation, and, as has been seen, the informal observational findings of Goldthorpe et al offer few leads. However, a few hints concerning the character of management-worker relations on the shop floor can be gathered from a couple of reports by journalistic commentators. With due allowance for some conspicuous deficiencies of the genre, such reports at least point up issues which neither Cambridge team adequately addresses.[198]

Graham Turner, an industrial correspondent with a particular interest in the motor industry, has provided some indications of the character of the so-called paternalistic regime at Vauxhall in the 1950s and into the 1960s. In particular his celebration of management's sophisticated personnel strategy suggests real shifts in shop-floor bargaining underlying the record of industrial peace.[199] Thus the origins of the Management Advisory Committee lay in the special conditions of war-time production but still "fights and .. walk-outs marked the M.A.C.'s early days"; by the 1960's the hallmark of the industrial relations strategy of management appeared to be not only accessability but also conciliatory responses to shop floor demands, so the Turner could report "whenever a strike threatened -- and they often have -- the management have been exceedingly conciliatory" (indeed "Vauxhall is so conciliatory that it is often accused of softness, even by the M.A.C. men. 'They don't negotiate -- they just give in', said a union steward'," with examples drawn directly from areas of labour discipline and effort bargaining); but at the same time the consultative machinery was becoming less effective and steward organisation more important, prompting the assessment that "there is a sufficient groundswell against the M.A.C. to warrant a degree of pessimism...'As the firm has expanded, the M.A.C. has lost contact with the shop floor'."[200] Such a suggestion of the shifting ground of

effort bargaining raises interesting but unanswerable questions about the differing emphases of the reports of Zweig, Turner and Goldthorpe et al. May the relatively hard line on job transfers reported by Zweig for 1958-59, have been mitigated by the early 1960s reported by Turner; and might this explain the rather confused hints given by Goldthorpe in his 1966 article?[201] Given the limited evidence, as well as the possibility that different departments and sections could have had different experiences, one can only speculate; though as will be seen there is some evidence of a management drive to tighten discipline and control on the shop-floor in the later '60s, at a time when industrial conflict became more overt at the firm.

Two further points arising from Turner's account deserve mention. The first concerns the confirmation he provides for the significance which H.A. Turner and his team attach to job security and insecurity. In the context of Vauxhall, workers experienced an exceptional degree of job security within the motor industry, but still their earnings levels remained dependant upon systematic overtime and this remained a major focus of anxiety: "The cloud on the horizon for the young men who cannot remember the despair of the pre-war slumps is a cut in overtime....'It's always a shadow overhead. At work it's always coming into the conversation' 'If they hear that overtime is cut, or they're on a four-day week, it's like putting a light under a bonfire!'".[202] The second point which should be mentioned in passing is that Turner endorses an embourgeoisement account of the Vauxhall worker, but despite his enthusiasm for that interpretation he concedes virtually all of Goldthorpe and Lockwood's critical points. Thus he recognises that their earnings are dependant on overtime and arduous work which together constrain non-work activities ("the effect of this endless round of toil is plain — it leaves men tired, gives the coup de grace to already apathetic trade unionists and kills social life"); the absence of clear implications of political change ("involvement in politics is also minimal and centres around material results rather than any doctrinal preferences", while the "great majority are Labour in name"); and indeed continuing working-class self-identification ("all the workers I spoke to clung passionately to a working class label").[203] On these bases he is forced to conclude that "the signs of a new middle class on the American pattern are plain to see, but nobody at Vauxhall is going to admit the fact, not even to themselves."[204] Beneath the rhetoric Turner had adopted a position close to that of the Luton researchers almost before the research had begun!

The second journalistic source is both more tantalising and more problematical than the first, as it represents a claimed exposé of conditions on the shop floor at Vauxhall in the later 1960s, conducted and presented within the well-established framework of denunciation of lazy workers and 'reds under the bed', laced in this case with racist asides. This is the format of a series of articles by Paddy McCarvey in the Sunday Telegraph during March 1968, ostensibly reporting on his experiences during three months working as a manual worker at Vauxhall in 1967-68 in a 'journalist-as-covert-participant-observer' role.[205] However if we can give any credence to his account, he suggests some critical features of the process of shop-floor bargaining at Vauxhall in the period of increasing strike (and lock-out) activity, which, against the background implied by Graham Turner, may add considerably to the analysis of the sources of the Vauxhall disputes and the character of the so-called 'explosions of consciousness'.

The first point which is suggested by a sober assessment of McCarvey's account is that there had been a hardening management line in the later 1960s, which was linked to increasing intervention and tighter control by General Motors, the American parent company. The second point is that such developments had been met with significant shop-floor counter-control initiatives among some sections of workers, along the lines well documented for other motor firms. Such patterns of increased control and intensification confronted by varieties of sabotage and counter-control are indicated by such passages as the following (though McCarvey inevitably focusses upon workers' transgressions of management rules):

> "the cars coming into Final Finish were not finished at all; that the bulk of them, some still with paint damage, were in a state of deshabille in their interior trim, with seats, carpets, rubbers, and beadings missing, or if not missing simply thrown inside in a jumbled heap...I was in fact witnessing the battle for American control. And American control, I was to find, was not the most popular aspect of life on the factory floor at Luton...The first indication of Detroit's change of policy came four years ago (1964), when an American...was appointed Director of Manufacturing at Vauxhall...[followed by appointment of Americans as Chairman and as Production Manager]...their appointment, and the seconding of Americans to minor posts throughout the Vauxhall hierarchy, the push for faster production with greater efficiency, has plunged the Vauxhall complex, long noted for its industrial calm, into a boiling cauldron of resentment."[206]

More details emerge in his second article, "Battle of the 'imperfects'":

> "As January went by the number of 'imperfects' still mounted.... Naturally my mates blamed the bosses -- 'the bleedin' Yanks, pushing them out too quick'....By the end of February it was an open secret in Luton that there were 3,000 imperfects parked all over the place. ...Now some of the lads in the Trim shop seemed to have plenty of leisure time....the explanation lay in their custom of 'working back' The lads fitting the carpets, for instance, could work back down the line at a much faster rate than the cars were approaching their normal working position, and so give themselves perhaps an extra forty minutes' relief time. It was expressly forbidden, of course. During my night shift month we heard that 'the big Yank'.... had ordered the sacking of four trim men on day shift for 'working back' ....[following continuing build-up of 'imperfects'] the first sign of a crackdown came....when the indoor sick bay...was turned into two more Finish lines, making five in all, save that the new ones were 'static' -- cars were pushed from one position to the next....On the following day there were big gaps in my track, but the cars coming through were completely finished inside, and on the third day of that week ....'Kelly was stopping cars on the end of the trim track' and insisting on complete finish before the body drop....That action naturally stopped all the cars behind, leaving no excuse for them to be unfinished. The result was, on this Wednesday, production had fallen from around 240 cars to 138....Even though a much higher proportion of the smaller production figure were fit for the final inspection card....this situation, for as long as it lasted, represented a victory for the 'Vaumfam' extremists who preached 'Stop the American speed-up'. American speed-up will certainly go on, yet as early as the following day a few cars began arriving with the 'T' for trim-complete stamp, but with their floor rubbers and window beading hanging loose."[207]

While the conventional ideological format of such reporting is clearly apparent, there is sufficient circumstantial detail and plausibility to suggest that quite substantial conflicts over effort bargaining and counter-control accompanied the wage and insecurity issues pinpointed by Goldthorpe et al in their comments on the strikes of 1965-67. In addition McCarvey indicates the continuation of the weakening of the institutionalised bargaining relationships focussed on by both Turner and Turner et al, suggesting that:

> "Before the [productivity] agreement last autumn the American management insisted on circulating its proposals not through union

> channels and the shop-stewards but to every single employee by individual circular. That move led to a great deal of trouble, which it was meant to avoid. It was a blunder which undermined union authority and the power of the shop-stewards, who at Vauxhall, are not irresponsible 'wildcatters'....thus the unions, discredited also by the frustration of pay freezes, seem to be in a dangerous vacuum, not helped by bull-dozing Americans insisting on passing information direct to men on the floor!'[208]

Finally, his reports suggest an intriguing possibility in understanding the character of the earlier 'explosions of consciousness', by suggesting the central saliency, in the context of an underdeveloped Labourism and the increasing intervention of American management, of an anti-American labour rhetoric as the ideological framework of a vehement and volatile demonstrative opposition which, yet, can be assimilated to the established patterns of conciliatory bargaining to some degree. Such a suggestion emphasises the need for a nuanced analysis of the ideological and institutional context if analyses of such 'explosions' are to advance beyond the positions criticised earlier.

Summary

In this chapter I have explored several implications of the manner in which Goldthorpe, Lockwood, Bechhofer and Platt analyse the work and market situations of the affluent worker. I have argued that a crucial feature of their approach was the conceptualisation of work situations in terms of a typology of technical implications which represent the concomitants of distinctive market situations, an approach which precludes any developed analysis of the social relations of production. In the first section of the chapter I traced the development of this element of the Affluent Worker analysis from Goldthorpe's early engagement with technicism through to the incorporation of a conventional technical implications typology in the design of the Luton research, where it figured as a descriptive categorisation without provoking any direct theoretical confrontation with the systems theorising which had come to underpin many of the technical implications analyses. In the following section I considered the role of this conception of work situation in the initial research publications of the Luton project, which were concerned to intervene in the sub-discipline of industrial sociology to critique both human relations and technical implications theorising. I have argued that, paradoxically, the technology typology served as a

basis of these critiques, and remained, in combination with a 'neo-classical' model of assortment and choice within the labour market, the substantive structural basis for the focus on workers' orientations and their attribution of meaning to the conditions and circumstances of their work. Thus, in Goldthorpe's interventions in his published and unpublished articles on the Vauxhall assemblers, these features defined the terrain upon which he repudiated the direct determinism of technology in favour of the mediating role of orientations, but retained technicism as the basis of an account of the character and variation of production organisation as such.

Having established this pivotal role of the technical implications typology in the Goldthorpe approach, I then considered the manner in which an inconsistent treatment of choice and constraint in the labour market, combined with a technicist treatment of production, underwrote the analysis of the instrumentalism of the Vauxhall assemblers. I argued that Goldthorpe's emphasis upon the relative stability of the commitment of these workers through the formal labour contract, and upon the narrow and 'contained' foci of their conflicts with their employer, rested upon these problematical features of his analysis, and particularly upon his impoverished treatment of the uncertainty and conflict characteristic of the immediate social organisation of the production process. Such limitations were the fundamental targets of the critiques mounted by Blackburn, Beynon and Nichols, and Westergaard, and underpinned such arguments as those conducted over the significance of Goldthorpe's interpretation of workers' answers to the famous 'teamwork' question.

The middle section of the chapter addressed the analysis of work situations and orientations to work of all the categories of workers investigated in the Luton study, presented in the first full report of the research, The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour. In considering this report I sought to combine the themes of this and the previous chapter, to consider the adequacy of the analyses of market and production relations of the different occupational groupings and to reassess the implications of these analyses for the project of class demarcation on the manual/non-manual divide which was the focus of my earlier discussion. I argued that the characterisations of market choice and of technical production relations grounded inconsistent amalgamations and differentiations in the Cambridge analysis, for in their own terms a similar case can be made for the importance of the skilled/non-skilled divide

as for the clerical/skilled demarcation. Implicit in my discussion was the claim that Goldthorpe et al sought a simple empirical correspondence between the notion of sale of labour power and particular work and market conditions, whereas the specific market and work experiences of the different occupational groups need to be analysed as specific variants of the development of the fundamental relations between labour and capital. This theme will be given further attention in the next chapter and in the case study of the experience of skilled workers, reported in part two.

Having considered the manner in which Goldthorpe et al ground their account of the relative stability and narrow cash-focus of the bargaining relationships between their affluent workers and their employers, the final section of the chapter considers more closely the controversy about the significance of industrial disputes for their analysis. In this section I suggest that the equivocations in the Cambridge analysis of market choice and constraint are reflected in equivocations in their prognosis for industrial conflict, but that the fundamental weaknesses of their analysis stem from their technicist treatment of production relations, which preempts any analysis of the instabilities and shifts characteristic of effort bargaining. On this basis I suggest that marxian critiques expose fundamental weaknesses of the Cambridge analysis which arise from these neo-weberian features of their approach. At the same time I suggest that all of the contributers to the debate about 'explosions of consciousness', from Goldthorpe et al through Mann to Blackburn, operate with crude dichotomous treatments of class consciousness of various sorts, none of which do justice to the processes of class mobilisation and ideological formation involved.

At this point it is appropriate to venture a general assessment of the Goldthorpian intervention in industrial sociology, going beyond the specific character of the Affluent Worker argument to consider the role it has played in the course of development of that 'sub-discipline'. This can most usefully be accomplished by considering the account of its role provided by Michael Rose (incidentally an 'insider' account since he was a "routine field worker" on the project), in his consnectus of the development of industrial sociology in its many variants towards an increasingly coherent sociological disciplinary identity.[209] Three points arise from his account. The first concerns the circumstances surrounding the decisive break with 'plant sociology' accomplished by Goldthorpe et al. Rose deploys a modest, or diluted, mix of Kuhnian analysis of

disciplinary innovation, Gouldnerian diagnosis of the 'domain assumptions' of sociological orthodoxies, and sensitivity to the diffuse conditioning role of economic conditions, to trace the development from Taylorism through varieties of industrial psychology and 'human relations' to socio-technical theorising and beyond.[210] He locates technical implications analyses well within this framework: they are seen to develop as critiques of orthodoxy on the periphery of institutionalised managerial sociology; to embrace additional features of industrial life but to represent relatively unthreatening criticisms of such sociology, being concerned to proffer advice to management while being premissed upon optimism about technical progress; and to be readily assimilable to the emergent multi-disciplinary enterprise of organisation theory, itself grounded in consensus assumptions.[211] He is less clear in his location of Goldthorpe et al (and other 'actionalist' theorists) in such terms; though it is implied that the relatively marginalised position of sociology as an academic discipline in the U.K. in the early 1960's facilitated the development of anti-functionalist critiques of orthodoxy, while the tail-end of the post-war boom facilitated the mounting of those critiques in terms which had a tenuous structural location and minimal economic referents.[212] These features together with the development of youth counter-cultures, may have served as conditions for the emergence of what Rose calls interactionist and phenomenological actionalism, but I hope to have shown that a more specific location of Goldthorpe et al is possible. I have argued, following Beynon and Nichols to some extent but with more attention to academic and disciplinary institutionalisation, that the intervention of the Cambridge team has to be seen as inspired by an academic mutation of the social democratic project of social reform; that mutation taking the specific form of a proto-institutionalised professional sociology defining itself in tension with the American model and appealing particularly to the substantive analysis and theoretical tenets of Max Weber for its legitimation. Such an account is compatible with both the content and spirit of Rose's overall account, but represents a fuller location of the <u>Affluent Worker</u> project than he offers and one which helps to explain the paradigmatic role it played for a period in British sociology.

The other two points in Rose's account are more specific and concern the particular paradigmatic influence the industrial study had, firstly in terms of the logic of development of the research itself and secondly in terms of its reception and the elaboration of 'phenomerological actionalism'. On the first point Rose offers a strong variant of MacKenzie's argument, namely that particular research and analytical contingencies

diverted Goldthorpe et al away from their broader class analysis toward a narrow concern with orientations. His diagnosis at this point focusses on the danger that the study might promote "a proliferation of sociologistic middle-range theories, which abstracted the phenomena from their wider socio-economic context on the one hand and ignored their internally dynamic aspects on the other."[213] He continues in the following terms:

> "it is ironic that the Luton studies which, as a whole, were concerned very much with an aspect of the wider socio-economic structure, and with social process, should encourage such a tendency; but it could be said that they do. To a large extent, they do so accidentally; because they relied predominantly upon survey techniques and because many of the industrial findings were quite unexpected and the Affluent Worker was indeed an 'unforseen by-product'."[214]

This, then, is a clear statement of the now established assessment. Though it overstates the unexpectedness of the findings given the decisions about the research firms, it is no doubt true that the particular research site and the predominating methods (Rose regrets particularly the elusiveness of observational evidence) influenced the outcome of the research. Similarly the general Weberian methodological injunctions about socially meaningful action and ideal types of action readily translated into a focus on orientations and the typology of traditional and instrumental class fractions. However, as I have already shown above, such an account of the warping of the project framework glosses over the intimate relationship between the neo-weberian theorisation of class relations, with which the project began, and the later industrial analysis. The two key components of the substantive analysis of the class situation of the Affluent Worker, the market situation conceived as an arena of choice for mere wage labourers and the work situation conceived as an array of technical concomitants of market situations, constitute the substantive 'structural' parameters for the conceptualisation and empirical demonstration of the significance of orientations. In particular the break with plant sociology celebrated by Rose pivots around, and continues to depend upon, a technical implications analysis of the 'plant' itself. In that sense, it could be said, the paradigmatic revolution represented by the Luton study was accomplished on a quite narrow terrain, and was open to re-appropriation as an additional 'variable' alongside the technical and organisational variables beloved of the organisation theorists.[215]

These considerations lead into Rose's final point, concerning the manner in which the 'orientations' theme was carried into later sociological work. As he notes:

> "middle-range actionalism [his term for the focus on orientations] fails to encourage investigators to situate their analyses of worker orientations and behaviour within an explicit model of society. More evidently, it discourages examination of the processes whereby orientations are modified by experiences in work. The brand of actionalism examined in this chapter [Phenomenological actionalism exemplified by the work of David Silverman] seeks to rectify this second defect. But in so doing it diverts attention even further from the first."[216]

This characterisation neatly captures at least one important phase in the reception and translation of the message of the Affluent Worker industrial monograph. One response to the superficial treatment of the dynamics of the labour contract which arose from Goldthorpe's market focussed and covertly technicist analysis was to project the concern with the attribution of meaning into the sphere of the organisation and reorganisation of work itself. This response itself built upon studies which had been slighted in Goldthorpe's narrow conception of effort bargaining, such as the ethnographic and interactionist studies of the shop floor of Donald Roy and others and the 'processual' studies of whole enterprises conducted by such mavericks as Gouldner and Burns.[217] In these respects it sought to recover some of the heterodox contributions to industrial studies which had been marginalised not only by the technical implications theorists but also by Goldthorpe et al (and which symptomatically receive minimal attention in Rose's guide to orthodoxies). However Rose's assessment is particularly acute in noting that this response and recovery, while amplifying and transforming the Goldthorpian perspective in one direction, compounded its deficiencies in another. While opening the dynamics and ambiguities of the labour contract to analysis, it relinquished even the modest and fragmentary structural location of that contract in terms of class situations, embraced by the neo-weberian authors of the Luton study.

In the institutional context of British academic sociology of the late 1960s, when the project of a professionalised sociological discipline espoused by the immediate post-war cadre of sociology teachers was being cross-cut by the rapid expansion of the tertiary education sector (and the subject) and by the radicalisation of many students, the initial reception of Goldthorpe et al took rather varied forms. The

attempt to provide a purely empirical reconciliation of the competing claims of orientations and technology, and the elaboration of a more thoroughgoing subjectivist and processual 'actionalism', both noted above, as well as the marxian critiques which have been discussed in detail in the body of this chapter.[218] The former responses will not be discussed in any detail here since the focus of my concern is upon class analysis, and as Rose implies they contribute little to such analyses, having defined their concerns either in narrowly empirical terms or in relation to a generic order versus conflict or control problematic.

Thus in the following chapter I will focus attention instead upon those approaches which retained the explicit concern of the Affluent Worker project with some variant of class analysis. In particular I will consider those occupational studies which were directly related to the Lockwoodian analysis of variations in the experience and outlook of different sections of the working class (such as those collected in Bulmer); the detailed empirical study of a particular labour market conducted by Blackburn and Mann; and some of the marxian ethnographies of class struggle at work (those by Beynon, Nichols and Armstrong).[219] This should not be taken to imply that the other lines of debate which followed the Affluent Worker project had nothing to contribute to class analysis. The subjectivist current clearly influenced the treatment of class consciousness in at least some of these studies, while many ethnographic and occupational studies with 'actionalist' preoccupations retained or developed at least some attempt to locate their analyses in terms of class relations. In particular the heterodox analysis of the effort bargain developed by Baldamus, and noted in my introduction, served as a common point of reference for such limited and tentative structural analyses.[220] Nevertheless I believe that the principles of selection which I have outlined above will serve to focus the critical issues in class analysis which I have identified in the last few chapters.

chapter 3: footnotes

1 MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Study" pp 238-239.

2 David Lockwood and John Goldthorpe "The Manual Worker: Affluence, Aspirations and Assimilation" Annual Conference of the British Sociological Association 1962 p 15.

3 Ibid p 17.

4 Ibid p 31.

5 Goldthorpe et al Industrial p 3 note, and also Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 24 and 39-41 where fresh grounds for this research decision are cited.

6 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 40 note 2 cites papers suggesting doubts about the character and impact of process production.

7 Joan Woodward Management and Technology London 1958 and Robert Blauner Alienation and Freedom Chicago 1964.

8 Both by John Goldthorpe "The Social Action Approach to Industrial Sociology: a reply to Daniel" Journal of Management Studies 7 1970 who writes "under the influence of Blauner, Woodward and others" p 200, and MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Study" who notes "following Blauner and Woodward they argue" p 239; though Blauner is not cited among the variety of proponents of technical implications in the first critical commentary, but is only referenced later, in the discussion in John Goldthorpe "Orientation to Work and Industrial Bahaviour among Assembly Line Operatives" Teachers section, British Sociological Association 1965.

9 Lockwood "New Working Class"; Lockwood "Sources of Variation"; Lockwood and Goldthorpe "Manual Worker".

10 Goldthorpe et al Industrial.

11 MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Study" p 238.

12 John Goldthorpe "Technical Organisation as a Factor in Supervisor-Worker Conflict" British Journal of Sociology 10 1959.

13 Ibid p 223.

14 See the disclaimers made in Ibid p 227, though Richard Brown has suggested to me that Goldthorpe may have been more committed to technical implications analysis than this suggests.

15 Ibid p 227.

16 Eric Trist and K.W. Bamforth "Technicism" in Tom Burns (ed) Industrial Man Harmondsworth 1969 pp 332, 340 and 357; Goldthorpe "Technical Organisation" p 228.

17 Joan Woodward Industrial Organisation: Theory and Practice London 1965; Eric Trist et al Organisational Choice London 1963; and Blauner Alienation and Freedom.

18 Goldthorpe "Social Action Approach" p 200.

19 See Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 34.

20 John Goldthorpe "Attitudes and Behaviour of Car Assembly Workers: a Deviant Case and a Theoretical Critique" British Journal of Sociology 17 1966; Goldthorpe "Orientations"; Goldthorpe et al Industrial.

21 Goldthorpe "Social Action Approach" pp 199-203, esp 200.

22 Goldthorpe et al Industrial p 1, and similar phrases which re-emphasise the point in Goldthorpe's replies to Daniel in Goldthorpe "Social Action Approach", and John Goldthorpe "Daniel on Orientations to Work - a final comment" Journal of Management Studies 9 1972.

23 For a contemporary guide to the scope of the sociology of industry and some of its sub-traditions see Tom Burns "The Sociology of Industry" in A.T. Welford et al (eds) Society: Problems and Methods of Study London 1962.

24 Goldthorpe "Orientations" note 20.

25 This is acknowledged in both Goldthorpe "Orientations" p 25 and Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 236.

26 Robert Dubin "Industrial Workers' Worlds" Social Problems 3 1956; Goldthorpe's rephrasing of Dubin's terminology, in "Orientations" note 40 and in Goldthorpe et al Industrial p 39, does not significantly differentiate their positions.

27 Blauner Alienation and Freedom chapter 5, esp pp 115-123, on the industrial relations consequences of assembly-line experience.

28 Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 229.

29 Ibid p 231.

30 Michael Mann Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class London 1973 pp 24-29.

31 See also Tony Elger "The Action Framework and Industrial Sociology" University of Durham graduate seminar paper 1968 pp 6-7.

32 Goldthorpe "Orientations" note 40. Goldthorpe's commitment to the modest interpretation which recognises the reality of work deprivations is clearly emphasised in this paper, pp 12-13, where the notion of 'happy robots' is sharply criticised, and also in Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 228.

33 Ely Chinoy Automobile Workers and the American Dream New York 1955, in comparison with Charles Walker and Robert Guest Man on the Assembly Line Cambridge, Mass. 1952, Blauner Alienation and Freedom, and Woodward Management and Technology.

34 Goldthorpe "Orientations" p 20.

35 Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 230.

36 Since many of the arguments in the Goldthorpe/Daniel debate focussed upon evidence and conceptualisation concerning the instrumentalism of the Vauxhall assembly line workers those arguments will be considered at this stage, rather than in the assessment of the 'industrial' monograph.

37 Chinoy Automobile Workers pp 69-70.

38 Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 238.

39 This and the following remarks are adressed to Goldthorpe's argument in "Social Action Approach" pp 199-203, from which this characterisation of the data is taken.

40 Goldthorpe "Orientations" pp 10, 18 and 26; see also Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 239 esp.

41 Goldthorpe "Attitudes" esp p 239, with reference to Amitai Etzioni A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organisations New York 1961. Etzioni's contribution has since been criticised in a manner which has some relevance to my own discussion of Goldthorpe, in V.L. Allen Social Analysis: a Marxist critique and alternative London 1975.

42 Goldthorpe "Attitudes" pp 229-231.

43 W.W. Daniel "Industrial Behaviour and Orientations to Work" Journal of Management Studies 6 1969 p 375; see also W.W. Daniel "Productivity Bargaining and Orientations to Work: A Rejoinder to Goldthorpe" Journal of Management Studies 8 1971.

44 In their only direct comment on Baldamus,Goldthorpe et al fail to recognise this context of constraint, and also gloss over Baldamus's emphasis on the dynamic and precarious stabilisation of effort, when they posit a settled subordination of work deprivations to wage and work satisfactions among the setters (and more widely among their sample?). See Goldthorpe et al Industrial p 24 ftnt 1, referring to Baldamus Efficiency and Effort. At the same time the unresolved relationship between 'objective' and 'subjective' disparities in the Baldamus analysis may invite this subjectivist reversal of emphasis in conceptualising deprivations and satisfactions.

45 Goldthorpe "Social Action Approach" p 208.

46 Goldthorpe "Attitudes" pp 229-231 and the equivalent data reported in Goldthorpe et al Industrial pp 31-33, together with the details of the occupational classification used in the study, provided in their appendix C, pp 193-4. H.A. Turner et al Labour Relations in the Motor Industry London 1967, provide an indication of the recruitment policies of motor employers which lead to recruitment of adult workers with some prior work experience: see for example p 172.

47 R.M. Blackburn and Michael Mann The Working Class in the Labour Market London 1979. This work will be considered further in chapter four.

48 This misrepresentation occurs in Daniel "Industrial Behaviour" p 368.

49 Margaret Grieco "The Shaping of a Work Force: A Critique of the Affluent Worker Study" International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy 1981, pp 62-88.

50 Ibid p 66. Grieco suggests that Skefko did similar recruiting (note 67).

51 Ibid p 65 for employment insecurity, and p 67 for the policies of employment agencies.

52 Ibid p 71.

53 Ibid pp 71-73.

54 Ibid p 67.

55 Ibid footnotes 36, 89, 100 and 112.

56 The argument about employer-provided information is derived from a claim about vested interests, ibid, footnote 53.

57 Ibid pp 74-80. The evidence for this practice at Vauxhall dates from the early 1970s, while the paper also summarises scattered evidence of the significance of kin-based recruitment more generally. This practice is clearly important in reproducing particular patterns of employer-worker relations, though I am unable to follow these implications further at this point. One variant of the informal recruitment pattern, and some of its implications for access to jobs among black workers, are discussed in the Commission for Racial Equality report on Massey-Ferguson, Coventry; while a more general discussion is provided by Tony Manwaring "The Extended Internal Labour Market" Cambridge Journal of Economics 8 1984.

58 Grieco discusses the interpenetration of work and kin/friendship relations largely in terms of a challenge to the claim that workplace sociability becomes of limited significance for workers in such labour market and employment settings as those of Vauxhall and Luton, but she does not go beyond establishing such a possibility and does not explicitly consider potential implications for effort bargaining and management-worker conflict, Her baseline position is that if such interpenetration was rare in Luton, then Luton was very atypical.

59 Daniel "Industrial Behaviour" p 368.

60 Mann Consciousness and Action pp 25-28.

61 Westergaard "Cash Nexus": Daniel "Industrial Behaviour" and "Productivity Bargaining"; and Richard Brown "Sources of Objectives in Work and Employment" in John Child (ed) Man and Organisation London 1973.

62 Goldthorpe "Orientations" note 3; see also Goldthorpe et al Industrial p 41 and Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker pp 118-119.

63 Blauner Alienation and Freedom p 119, and pp 110-121 compared with p 122.

64 Chinoy Automobile Workers pp 133-134, and for the repudiation of any simple determination of work exigencies see pp 114, 117 and 119. See also Blauner Alienation and Freedom p 123 note.

65 Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 239.

66 Ibid p 238 and very similar passages in "Orientations" pp 27-30.

67 See particularly W. Baldamus Efficiency and Effort London 1961; Hilda Behrend "The Effort Bargain" Industrial and Labour Relations Review 10 1957, and "A Fair Day's Work" Scottish Journal of Political Economy 8 1961.

68 Behrend "Fair Day's Work" p 103.

69 Baldamus Efficiency and Effort, and also Donald Roy "Efficiency and the 'Fix'" American Journal of Sociology 60 1954-5.

70 Goldthorpe "Orientations" p 28.

71 Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 244 note 44, for the characterisation of workers' arguments; "Orientations" p 28 for the reasons the firm could pay more.

72 Goldthorpe "Orientations" p 26, and see also pp 15-16 and "Attitudes" p 229 and note 8.

73 On the seniority of Vauxhall workers see Goldthorpe et al Industrial p 118.

74 Chinoy Automobile Workers pp 17-18, 33 and 67-68.

75 Blauner Alienation and Freedom pp 92-95.

76 Ibid p 10 for the remark on economic exigencies, and pp 180-181 for the acknowledgement of this in his prognosis.

77 Turner et al Labour Relations in Motor Industry esp. chapter 4.

78 Goldthorpe "Orientations" p 30 and notes 56 and 39.

79 Ibid note 39.

80 Ibid p 21.

81 Graham Turner The Car Makers London 1963, pp 122-129.

82 Daniel "Industrial Behaviour" passim.

83 Goldthorpe "Orientations" p 13.

84 Goldthorpe "Daniel on Orientations" p 271, compared with Beynon and Nichols "Modern British Sociology" note 10.

85 Goldthorpe "Orientations" p 37

86 Ibid p 38.

87 See especially Tom Lupton On the Shop Floor London 1963, and the various articles by Donald Roy, especially "Efficiency and the 'Fix'".

88 Goldthorpe "Orientations" p 26.

89 Huw Beynon Working For Ford Harmondsworth 1973, pp 102-103.

90 Harvie Ramsay "Research Note: Firms and Football Teams" British Journal of Industrial Relations 13 1975, p 399.

91 Goldthorpe et al Industrial esp pp 74-75 and notes.

92 Ramsay "Firms and Football Teams" p 397.

93 Robin Blackburn "Inequality and Exploitation" New Left Review 42 1967; Beynon and Nichols "Modern British Sociology": Westergaard "Cash Nexus".

94 Westergaard "Cash Nexus" p 120.

95 Blackburn "Inequality" p 17.

96 Beynon and Nichols "Modern British Sociology" p 14; the later work of these authors will be considered in the next chapter.

97 This issue will be given further attention in the next chapter, in the discussion of the work of Beynon, Nichols and also Mann.

98 For example Andrew Glyn and Bob Sutcliffe British Capitalism, Workers and the Profits Squeeze Harmondsworth 1972, which focusses particularly on the experience of the 1960's.

99 Dudley Jackson et al Do Trade Unions Cause Inflation? Cambridge 1972

100 Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 239.

101 Ibid p 240.

102 See the earlier discussion in chapter two; Lockwood "Sources of Variation"; and more generally on the critique of functionalism see David Lockwood "Some Remarks on the 'Social System'" British Journal of Sociology 7 1956.

103 Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 241.

104 MacKenzie "Affluent Worker Study".

105 Brown "Sources of Objectives in Work".

106 Seymour Melman Decision-Making and Productivity Oxford 1958, referenced, but not discussed, in Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 241. Of course Melman's interpretation of the pattern of bargaining and work relations at the Standard plants in Coventry has proved controversial (see for example Andrew Friedman Industry and Labour London 1977, chapters 14 and 15, and for a more critical view Steve Tolliday "High Tide and After: Coventry engineering workers and shopfloor bargaining, 1945-80" in Bill Lancaster and Tony Mason (eds) Life and Labour in a Twentieth Century City: the case of Coventry forthcoming, 1985), but there remains general agreement that the 'gang system' as it was worked there in the post-war decades diverged significantly from the Fordist assembly-line model.

107 Goldthorpe's characterisation of Blauner, in "Attitudes" p 239; Blauner on union organisation Alienation and Freedom pp 114-115, on institutionalisation of conflict p 109 esp. note 43, on regulation of speed-up pp 100-101, and on industrial conflict of a covert sort pp 99, 104, 106, 109 and esp. p 115. Chinoy comes closer to technicism in "Manning the Machines" in P. Berger (ed) The Human Shape of Work New York 1964.

108 Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 240. The most obvious target for Goldthorpe's critique of Woodward was her article "Industrial Behaviour: Is there a Science?" New Society 8 October 1964, where she provided an explicit statement of her theoretical rationale, and its implications for the industrial relations of the car industry in particular.

109 Goldthorpe et al Industrial pp 10-11.

110 Ibid pp 40-41 esp note 2: "the existence of an occupational community may itself lead to further limitations on economic rationality".

111 Ibid pp 54-55.

112 Ibid p 25.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid p 187 (appendix A, table A2) and p 7 note and p 118 note.

115 Ibid p 187 and p 125 on wages.

116 Ibid p 26 table 10 and p 32 table 16 on job moves, p 83 on criteria used to assess labour market alternatives, and chapter 5 on trade unionism.

117 Ibid pp 30-31 compared with p 32.

118 Blackburn and Mann Working Class in Labour Market pp 199-201, as against Goldthorpe et al Industrial p 33.

119 Goldthorpe et al Industrial p 166 note 2, and p 158.

120 Ibid pp 149-153, and quote from p 34.

121 Ibid p 117; figures calculated from table 51.

122 Ibid p 83. Unfortunately it is difficult to disentangle the data presented there in table 32, and in the appendices in table A6, to throw light on the grounds for staying in jobs compared with workers' views of wider labour market prospects, but at best it appears equivocal for the theses of the Cambridge team.

123 Ibid esp. pp 57-62.

124 Ibid pp 13-15, 20-22 compared with the contrasting attitudes revealed in tables 29, 31, 39, 40, 42, 49 and 50; though note that the setters were more likely than the craftsmen to be sceptical of work study, a feature which must surely be related to their experience as, and in relation to, the machinists.

125 Ibid p 21, and quotes on pp 20-21 and 67.

126 Ibid p 6 note 2 for the limitations placed on fieldwork by the demands of the overall project.

127 Ibid p 46 note 2.

128 Goldthorpe et al refer specifically to Lupton On the Shop Floor, chapters 2-6, but the contrasts appear as notable as the similarities.

129 Ibid p 46 where the figure of 70% is implicit in the footnote, and pp 85 (table 33), 18-19 (table 8) and 20-21, for the other findings.

130 Ibid p 73 on the teamwork question, p 87 (table 34) on the firm's ability to pay, and p 118 on job security. A further insight into the Skefko management strategy on plant capacity and job security can be gleaned from Christopher Tugendhat The Multinationals Harmondsworth 1973, ch. 8.

131 Goldthorpe et al Industrial pp 71-75; quotation from p 73.

132 Ibid p 76.

133 Ibid p 78 note 2.

134 Ibid p 89.

135 Ibid p 30.

136 Ibid p 37 for quote, and pp 26 (table 10) and 27 for data on staying and leaving.

137 Ibid p 89.

138 Ibid pp 48 note 1, 51, 55 note, 76 note and 105 all comment on isolation.

139 Ibid pp 87-88, calculations from tables 34 and 35, and table A2, and p 7 note, for attitudes to profit levels and the pay situation.

140 Ibid p 24.

141 For the data on preferences for past and future jobs in the firm see table 4 p 13 and table 6 p 15; for job insecurity see table 52 p 118.

142 Westergaard "Cash Nexus" p 119.

143 Goldthorpe et al Industrial appendix D, entitled 'Labour disputes at Vauxhall, 1965-67'.

144 Goldthorpe "Orientations" note 50.

145 Goldthorpe "Attitudes" p 230.

146 Goldthorpe et al Industrial p 84.

147 Goldthorpe "Orientations" p 27.

148 Ibid pp 28-30, and quote from p 31.

149 Ibid p 28 and p 37.

150 Ibid p 37 for the reference to 'business unionism' and note 73 on the dispute; Beynon and Nichols "Modern British Sociology".

151 Indeed the critics should be excused for thinking that Goldthorpe saw little prospect of industrial conflict, if they relied for their assessment upon the British Journal of Sociology article.

152 Blackburn "Inequality and Exploitation" pp 22-24.

153 Ibid p 23 quoting The Times 18 Oct 1966.

154 Ibid pp 23 and 24.

155 In this regard the later version of the same article, entitled "The Unequal Society" in Robin Blackburn and Alexander Cockburn (eds) The Incompatibles Harmondsworth 1967, provides a little more detail, on p 50.

156 Ibid p 51.

157 Goldthorpe et al Industrial pp 195-196.

158 Ibid p195, quoting footnote 2.

159 Ibid p 196.

160 Ibid.

161 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 55 note 2.

162 Andre Gorz "Workers' Control" Socialist Revolution 1 1970 esp pp 21-22: this account is also quoted as fact in Charles Perrow (ed) The Radical Attack on Business New York 1972 p 174.

163 Gorz "Workers' Control" pp 22-25.

164 He also misrepresents the argument about embourgeoisement at one point, when he suggests that Goldthorpe concluded "that the workers were behaving according to middle-class patterns" Ibid p 20.

165 Mann Consciousness and Action esp chapter 6.

166 Ibid p 46.

167 Ibid p 48.

168 Ibid pp 48-50.

169 Ibid p 49.

170 Ibid p 51.

171 Ibid p 68.

172 Ibid p 70.

173 Turner et al Labour Relations; Graham Turner Car Makers; and Paddy McGarvey "What Goes on in a Car Factory" Sunday Telegraph March 17 and 24, 1968. See also Grieco "Shaping a Work Force".

174 Turner et al Labour Relations p 62.

175 Ibid p 348.

176 Ibid p 347.

177 Ibid p 348. A rather different element of sophistication is the form of labour recruitment in non-union areas outlined by Grieco "Shaping a Work Force", though we can only speculate on the relation between this and those elements of strategy discussed by Turner et al.

178 Turner et al Labour Relations p 194 and p 348.

179 Ibid p 84.

180 Ibid p 216.

181 Ibid pp 98-99, and also p 347.

182 Ibid p 134.

183 Ibid p 171 and p 327.

184 Ibid, see especially pp 247-252, 339-344 and 350-356.

185 Ibid p 331; and also the remarks on cash compensation for track work on p 170.

186 Ibid p 169.

187 Ibid pp 168-171.

188 Ibid pp 88-96.

189 Goldthorpe et al Affluent Worker p 55 note.

190 As already noted, both Blauner and Chinoy also emphasise this aspect of the work experience of American car workers.

191 Turner et al Labour Relations p 62, and similar remarks on p 95, especially note, and on pp 350-351.

192 Ibid pp 169-170.

193 Ibid p 86, where, incidentally, the varied rate of introduction and penetration of these developments among firms in different sub-markets is evident.

194 Ibid pp 91-92. I have tried to relate this material to the wider post-Braverman debate about skills, the transformation of production and worker organisation in "Braverman, capital accumulation and deskilling" in Stephen Wood (ed) The Degradation of Work? London 1982, pp 50-52; while a broader overview of class relations within the motor industry is provided in Richard Hyman and Tony Elger "Job Controls, the Employers' Offensive and Alternative Strategies" Capital and Class 15, 1981, especially pp 133-140.

195 Turner et al Labour Relations especially pp 348-350.

196 Ibid p 337.

197 Ibid, discussed especially on p 336.

198 Turner Car Makers; and Paddy McGarvey "What Goes on in a Car Factory" Sunday Telegraph March 17, 1968 p 6, and "Battle of the 'imperfects'" Sunday Telegraph March 24, 1968 p 6.

199 Turner Car Makers, section two, chapter 2.

200 Ibid, successive quotes from pp 118, 93, 122 and 123.

201 Ferdinand Zweig The Worker in the Affluent Society London 1961, pp 238-240 on Vauxhall in 1958-9; and Goldthorpe "Attitudes", discussed above.

202 Turner Car Makers p 105.

203 Ibid section two, chapter 1, successive quotes from pp 105, 113 (two) and 109.

204 Ibid p 115.

205 McGarvey "What Goes On" and "Battle". His most obvious 'fingering' of shop-floor activists occurs under the separate heading, "How I infiltrated the Car industry's secret Militants" Sunday Telegraph March 24 pp 6-7. See also the response of Jack Jones to McGarvey's claims in Sunday Telegraph March 31; and letters, including a response by McGarvey, in Sunday Telegraph April 7.

206 McGarvey "What Goes On" p 6.

207 McGarvey "Battle" p 6.

208 Ibid.

209 Michael Rose Industrial Behaviour: Theoretical Developments since Taylor Harmondsworth 1978 edition.

210 The references are to T.S. Kuhn The Structure of Scientific Revolutions Chicago 1962, and A.W. Gouldner The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology London 1971, both discussed in Rose Industrial Behaviour chapters 1 and 30.

211 Rose Industrial Behaviour part 4, especially chapter 24.

212 Ibid part 5 especially chapters 26, 27 and 29.

213 Ibid p 239.

214 Ibid.

215 Hints of such a reconciliation are to be found in Frank Bechhofer "The Relationship between Technology and Shop-floor behaviour: a less heated look at a controversy" in D.O. Edge and J.N. Wolfe (eds) Meaning and Control London 1973.

216 Rose Industrial Behaviour p 243, referring especially to David Silverman The Theory of Organisations London 1970

217 For my own attempt at a synthesis in these terms, only slightly more explicit about any structural location than Silverman, see Tony Elger "Industrial Organisations: a Processual Perspective" in J.B. McKinlay (ed) Processing People London 1975, a contribution which fell into exactly the dilemma outlined by Rose. The key contributions of Gouldner and Burns were Alvin Gouldner Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy London 1955 and Tom Burns and G.M. Stalker The Management of Innovation London 1966.

218 For the disciplinary context see Halsey "Provincials and Professionals" and also J. Banks "The B.S.A. - The first fifteen years" Sociology 1, 1967. For approaches to the empirical reconciliation of the competing claims of orientations and technology see Bechhofer "Relationship between Technology and Shop-floor behaviour", and also Dorothy Wedderburn and Rosemary Crompton Workers' Attitudes and Technology Cambridge 1972. Finally, for the subjectivist actionalism see Silverman Theory of Organisations and also Elger "Industrial Organisations".

219 Bulmer (ed) Images; Beynon Working For Ford; Theo Nichols and Huw Beynon Living With Capitalism; Theo Nichols and Peter Armstrong Workers Divided; and Blackburn and Mann Working Class in Labour Market.

220 Baldamus Efficiency and Effort. See Stephen Ackroyd "Economic Rationality and the Relevance of Weberian Sociology to Industrial Relations" British J. Ind. Relations 12, 1974, and Richard Brown "The Sociology of Organisations" Mens en Maatschappij 1974 for expositions of Baldamus in such terms; and the comments in my introduction, page 16 and note 13, for an outline indication of some criticisms of Baldamus.

Chapter 4

Experience and Consciousness Among British Workers: Research and Debate following the 'Affluent Worker'

British sociology has, of course, long been preoccupied with issues of class division, conflict and consciousness, especially as these relate to the character and fate of 'Labourism', and during the 1970s these concerns became even more central against the background of incipient economic crisis, intensified industrial conflict, growing political volatility and the apparent exhaustion of the established strategies of the major political parties[1]. At the same time much of the sociological debate about these questions remained directly related to the analytical programme or the specific arguments advanced by Goldthorpe, Lockwood and their colleagues; testimony both to the success of these authors in defining the terms of professional social analysis of these questions, and to the centrality of the issues raised in the debates between them and their critics[2]. In this chapter I intend to provide only a selective review of the resulting research and debate during the 1970s, focussed upon arguments arising from detailed empirical studies, and particularly upon how these studies considered the character of class relations in production and the labour market, and the patterning and dynamics of worker organisation and consciousness.

I will begin by considering the cluster of studies and arguments which focussed on issues raised by Lockwood's classic discussion of 'sources of variation in working class images of society'[3]. Though they sometimes address the dynamics of class relations in the workplace, these studies focus on a more characteristic theme arising from the Luton research: the relation between specific social milieux and forms of social consciousness. Having considered a range of studies of localities, occupations and social imagery, I will then turn to the other major strand of empirical research, that of the marxian ethnographies of workplace class relations which were mentioned briefly in my earlier discussion of the 'cash nexus' and 'explosions of consciousness'. These studies, exemplified by Beynon's Working For Ford, have sought to explore both the specific character of capital-labour relations in particular workplaces and the forms and limitations of class consciousness in those settings[4]. Finally, in the conclusions to this chapter, I will comment briefly on some more general discussions of trade unionism and class consciousness, and I will point up the relevance of my own case study to some of the issues raised there[5].

Varieties of Social Imagery and Class Politics

Lockwood's article, dubbed by its author an extended footnote to the Affluent Worker monographs, had two interrelated purposes. First it extended the analytical programme of the Luton research to other sections of the working class, by developing a synthesis of occupational, community and voting studies to explore the normative, relational and structural features of distinctive working class milieux. Second, and most crucially, it elaborated critical benchmarks against which the distinctive features of the 'new working class' could be assessed. The debate which was sparked off by Lockwood's typology raised questions both about the adequacy of the benchmark provided by the notion of the 'traditional' working class, and, underlying this, about the whole structure of the Cambridge analysis of the relation between milieux and consciousness. Much of the debate centred on three main topics: the place or absence of strands of radicalism within the typology (and within the working class); the coherence and complexity of images of society; and the manner in which settings and milieux were conceptualised. I will look first at radicalism and imagery, and then in the next section address the relationship between milieux, the labour market and production[6].

The relationship between working class traditions and working class politics had, of course, been a focus of controversy within the embourgeoisement debate before the sustained intervention of Goldthorpe and Lockwood; and some of those discussions had traded upon a distinction between isolated, old fashioned, traditional strongholds of union militancy and modern, aspiring, 'classless' suburban workers. Such accounts, which implied an equation between the parochial communal solidarity of working class communities and traditions of class politics, had provoked a sharp critique from Westergaard, insisting that wider class solidarities did not merely grow out of, but also transcended parochial solidarities:

> "at the political level especially, the collective force of the labour movement grew precisely as the local isolation of ... working class communities declined...For the growth of a nation-wide movement... entailed of necessity a widening of horizons, and the displacement (if not total suppression) of local and sectional loyalties by commitment to a common aim, however uncertainly defined."[7]

Against this background Lockwood's typology, and especially his characterisation of the 'traditional proletarian' worker, evoked a double scepticism. For firstly it appeared to continue to run together parochial solidarities and class politics, as "primary groups of workmates ... provide the

elementary units of more extensive class loyalties".[8] And secondly it appeared to exclude the more radical features of class politics, and in particular those emphasised by Westergaard in his insistence on the way in which narrow loyalties may be displaced or suppressed within a wider class movement. For Westergaard "the parochial boundaries of traditional proletarianism have indeed been transcended, and are still being transcended every day, by working class opposition characterised by a sense of general class identity[9]." More than this, such opposition is not simply an ephemeral and transient feature, for radical class consciousness (of which "revolutionary consciousness" is but "one or perhaps several particular versions") has been an important component of almost all labour movements:

> "the vision of an alternative society may be an implicit one; but historically it has been more than that. Some vision of this kind has been carried within all the Social Democratic movements, as well as in the Communist movements, of Western capitalist societies: a vision, however inchoate, of a society different in character and quality from capitalism".[10]

Westergaard, then, emphasises a strand of radical class consciousness as a significant feature of both local activity and national organisation. Against this, Lockwood does not seek to dispute the characterisation of certain ideological tendencies within the organised labour movement, so much as to contest the relationship they may have to everyday experience and imagery. He argues that Westergaard collapses these together in his emphasis on a widespread though diffuse radicalism, whereas the labour movement itself constitutes a "stratification of consciousness in which there is a normal tension between the polished ideological products of its intellectuals and the roughly assembled constructions of social reality which arise from the everyday experiences of the mass membership."[11] It is this form of argument which underpins his vigorous defence of his original analytical focus upon specific social milieux:

> "it was never part of the intention of the original essay to provide an account of working class consciousness. It would be nonsensical to try to explain the formation of a societal and political ideology exclusively from the vantage point of work and community relations. The purpose was more limited: to show how certain forms of the latter sustained communal sociability and dichotomous class imagery."[12]

Nonetheless, while parochially formulated imagery could not be <u>sufficient</u> to explain particular, historically specific, forms of class consciousness, "the patterns of belief and aspirations which stem from experience of proximate social situations are an <u>essential part</u> of the analysis"[13]. For

it is these which provide "only the most elementary and inchoate matrix of sentiments out of which a political class consciousness might be fashioned", while the successful dissemination of radical doctrines will hinge upon their 'elective affinity' with such sentiments.[14]

Lockwood's defence of his position clarifies the specific analytical claims implicit in his typology, and provides an interesting discussion of the complex stratification of working class consciousness and organisation; one which cannot simply be dismissed by claimimg that the distinction between social imagery and class consciousness is, in Westergaard's words, "spurious....because any kind of class imagery has political connotations".[15] However, Westergaard's argument, even in the abbreviated form of his comment on Lockwood, involves more than this. Firstly he emphasises the complex and contradictory character of social imagery, against the apparent coherence of the patterns delineated in the ideal types. Secondly, and following on from this, he argues that radical strands of consciousness are not simply the property of organised political tendencies, but have roots in working class experience.[16] Thus Westergaard shares with Lockwood a repudiation of the vulgar-Leninist treatment of class consciousness as an alien middle-class import into the working class, which, perhaps paradoxically, had been adopted in Parkin's influential discussion of 'dominant', 'subordinate' and 'radical' value systems.[17] Unlike Lockwood, though, he follows through the implications of his disagreement with Parkin without relegating working class radicalism to some future, potential, 'property space' of the 1966 typology.[18] Instead he insists on what might be termed a 'vertical stratification' which cross-cuts the horizontal stratification emphasised by Lockwood; that is, both everyday, contradictory imagery and the more explicit (but perhaps no less contradictory) doctrines and programmes of the labour movement embrace <u>both</u> radical oppositional visions and commitments <u>and</u> defensive, accomodative practises and perspectives[19]. Harking back to Westergaard's initial critique of the <u>Affluent Worker</u>, this was the context for his emphasis on the complex interplay of movement doctrines and commonsense imagery (rather than some pure essence of experiential consciousness) and particularly on the significant but contradictory impact of Labourist perspectives <u>and actions</u> in the post-war period[20]. Accompanying this argument in Westergaard's contribution to the debate on Lockwood's paper is a third which will be taken up later, that wider social and economic processes rather than the particularities of specific milieux have set the critical conditions for the radical and more accomodative elements of both social imagery and movement doctrines.[21]

It is these arguments taken together, rather than any straightforward equation of imagery and doctrine, which represent the effective elements of Westergaard's critique of Lockwood's treatment of working class radicalism. They provide the context for the observation that "any kind of class imagery has political connotations", which then points up the argument I have labelled 'vertical stratification' of consciousness as particularly damaging to Lockwood's defence of his position. For while this argument involves a rejection of Parkin's insistence that radicalism has to be injected into the working class milieu from outside, it also involves a rejection of both the Lockwood and Parkin variants of the view that parochial social imagery has a pristine a-political form.[22] The implication of the rejection of such views is not of an automatic or repressed politicised radicalism, but rather an insistence on the interplay of radical and conventional, of a-political, sub-political and actively political elements in working class culture. Some of the implications of Westergaard's position, and further elements of Lockwood's defence of his typology can now be considered by moving away from the topic of labour movement doctrines to discuss more directly the character of social imagery, and then to consider the different ways in which the protagonists in debate conceptualise the social settings and social relations of working class life.

What, then, was claimed about the central topic of the symposium on the 'traditional worker', the character of working class social imagery? Perhaps the most obvious finding was that there was little evidence of any widespread and coherent class-conscious social imagery among the workers studied.[23] Thus Cousins and Brown note that among their shipyard workers "answers to attitudinal questions were by no means straightforwardly solidaristic or highly class conscious", while Blackburn and Mann's sampling of sections of the male, non-skilled manual labour market in Peterborough found little evidence of coherent radicalism, though they did discern slightly more left-wing views among union activists and among Asian moslem workers.[24] Given Lockwood's disclaimer of concern with political ideology such findings were not directly relevant to his typology, though they do suggest that any critique of his position for failing to consider radical elements of popular consciousness must, like Westergaard's, be quite modestly formulated in terms of contradictory strands and elements in such consciousness. Of much more direct relevance for the typology was the finding that social imagery was very varied and ambiguous so that neither 'proletarian' nor 'deferential' imagery were found as widespread and coherent forms. Thus Cousins and Brown discovered little obvious evidence of us-and-them power models among the Wallsend shipyard workers. Instead they documented a complex range of class

maps and criteria of mapping among their respondents, ranging from a third of their sample who adopted a two-class model in which money, snobbery and the like were the explicit criteria, to a three (or more) class model in which their informants occupied the 'middle' class on such grounds as money, education and social standing while the group beneath them were identified as the poor or the unskilled.[25] Meanwhile Bell and Newby found only a minority of agricultural workers with deferential or hierarchical images of society: money was again the most popular idiom; a two-class model, but one often emphasising interdependence of the classes, was the most popular schema; while the largest grouping in their sample was of people with some variant of ambivalent social imagery.[26] Similarly Martin and Fryer found that only a third of their interviewees exhibited the key features of deference, and then many of them shared an apparently incongrous awareness of elements of conflict with others who were much more generally ambivalent in attitude.[27]

Alongside these varied and complex patterns of imagery these authors also found contradictory and diverse attitudes to specific topics. For example Cousins and Brown chart some loose correspondences between imagery and attitudes to industrial relations matters, but also note two sorts of qualification to any neat typological analysis. Firstly, in relation to the balance of attitudes and opinions across the workforce, they note that:

> "there is evidence in the answers for considerable diversity of opinion and outlook. Very few of the questions received a pattern of replies overwhelmingly one way or the other. Even where there were definite majority viewpoints, there were substantial minorities; and the proportions change in ways which suggest a diversity of viewpoints rather than a few simple ones."[28]

The findings of Martin and Fryer imply a similarly varied texture of opinion within the workforce which they studied. Secondly Cousins and Brown note the existence of discrepancies between the more abstract and specific attitudes expressed by informants, in particular the characteristic discrepancy between views on strikes in general and in particular.[29] Such discrepancies imply not only different currents of opinion within the workforce, but tensions and complexities in the views of specific workers on such topics. Similarly Newby records several apparent contradictions in the judgements of farm workers about questions of social and political leadership, and notes:

> "these contradictory replies are indicative of an absence of abstract ideological principles that organise and define responses to specific questions - instead each question is considered seperately on its own merits with often little logical consistency between the responses",

adding later that "many /workers/ seem to operate with a multiplicity of images and half-formed beliefs and opinions which do not add up to any single coherent image".[30] The issue of coherence and consistency is also a central concern for Blackburn and Mann. They relied entirely on scaled attitude measures rather than the open-ended exploration of imagery adopted by Goldthorpe and Lockwood, Cousins and Brown and Bell and Newby; but alongside the limitations of such attitude measurement it did allow them to assess the relationship of workers' views on different, but variously related, issues of 'industrial politics'. On this basis they claim that, within a broadly shared ideological universe, their sample of non-skilled manual workers expressed attitudes in which:

> "the pattern is too clear to support an hypothesis of general confusion. On the other hand....there is a high degree of inconsistency....It seems clear that pragmatism, in the sense of response to the specific substance of an item (possibly intermixed with confusion) far outweighs ideology".[31]

Thus these studies document variety, complexity and contradiction, both in relation to individual attitudes and in terms of the range of views found within particular workforces. Such features should not obscure the common themes which <u>do</u> exist. Thus Blackburn and Mann acknowledge that in terms of wider contrasts their sample is "relatively homogeneous in ideology", though that ideology has relatively low salience for most workers.[32] More specifically, Cousins and Brown discern a 'latent proletarianism' among many of their shipyard workers in terms of the centrality of contrasts between workers and bosses, the limited emphasis given to distinguishing a conventional white-collar middle class, and the predominant identification of themselves with the bottom class. Thus:

> "individual opinion and collective action may show considerable confusion at any particular time and veer quite suddenly from one position to another over time. But the overall number of strategies of action and interpretation is not unlimited....A powerful but often latent class-consciousness is part of the interpretative vocabulary of shipbuilding workers, though the number of structural contexts where this could be displayed has hitherto been very limited".[33]

Despite such recognition of common themes, then, all these studies represented a sharp challenge to the implication of coherent and discrete forms of social imagery embodied in Lockwood's ideal types, and thus pose questions about additional or alternative analytical approaches.

Lockwood's response to these findings and arguments takes two main

forms. One of these is internal to the discussion of consciousness and imagery. It returns to the issues disputed with Westergaard by arguing that findings about political attitudes are irrelevant to the testing of the typology. For not only are specific images compatible with a whole range of specific beliefs, but those beliefs have independant momentum borne of political socialisation.[34] In particular Lockwood is inclined to dismiss the Blackburn and Mann argument about the pragmatically grounded fragmentation of opinion, because what they probed was political belief rather than imagery.[35] However, even with due recognition of the difficulties associated with Blackburn and Mann's methodology, such a defence rests on the inverse of Westergaard's supposed conflation of imagery and ideology: a spurious isolation of the formal structure of social imagery from any concomitant attitudes and judgements, which in the Peterborough research concerned quite substantive features of employment relations. Indeed, others of these studies, such as those of Cousins and Brown and Bell and Newby, pinpointed related characteristics of internal complexity and contextual variation of attitudes (for example those of the shipyard workers about industrial relations) interrelated with similarly complex features of social imagery. Certainly the issue of fragmentation and inconsistency of attitudes raises difficult questions of conceptualisation and method - as Lockwood suggests:

> "the fact that the respondent's answers to the investigator's questions do not exhibit the consistency which the investigators believe should obtain does not preclude the possibility that the respondent could provide a rationale for this apparent inconsistency if he were given the opportunity of relating his replies to his own construct of social and political life".[36]

On the other hand, though, Newby has pointed out that apparently coherent imagery might fragment under further probing.[37] In some respects some of the fresh methodological thoughts of Blackburn and Mann, prompted by their own recognition of the limitations of attitude surveys, seem more appropriate to catch the movement and interplay of images and attitudes intimated by the studies of shipyard and agricultural workers in particular:

> "one method would be intensive, though structured, discussions with individual workers, actually challenging them about particular lines of thought. Another would be discussions among groups of workers in which argument is encouraged....more methodologically conscious studies of workers' responses to actual contradictory situations, not only the occasional dramatic strike but also more mundane day to day processes of accomodation."[38]

I will consider later the ways in which the marxian ethnographies of work pursue some of these concerns, but now I need to consider the other strand of Lockwood's response, which focusses on the conceptualisation of social settings.

Social Settings, Social Relations and Ideal Types

While the arguments and findings about imagery are significant in themselves, Lockwood's major theme in his reflections on these studies is that many features of their findings can be understood very much in terms of the relationship between milieu and imagery addressed in his typology, once it is recognised that 'a highly simplified model, taking extreme types, cannot be directly applied without interpreting the variables'[39]. Thus the complex occupational divisions in shipbuilding, between skills and between tradesmen and labourers, give a different value to some of the variables in the 'traditional proletarian' milieu. Similarly the clash of local and newcomer status hierarchies in the countryside does the same for the 'traditional deferential' type. In each case some of the variations in social imagery become intelligible in Lockwoodian terms[40]. However, it is doubtful whether the mere elaboration and clarification of 'variables' or multiplication of types adequately addresses the findings and analyses in these studies. For central to their arguments is the theme of the contradictory character of immediate experience, and the active but 'loose' relationship between aspects of that experience and the play of competing perspectives and varied vocabularies. While this is a central and explicit theme in Blackburn and Mann ("if the workers in our sample are 'confused' then they have every right to be, for that is an accurate reflection of the reality which confronts them"), it should not be seen only as a corollary of the relatively featureless uncertainty which they emphasise as characteristic of the non-skilled labour market in Peterborough[41]. For Cousins and Brown note, rather modestly, that:

> "a social situation which gives rise to a coherent image of society may well be the exception rather than the rule....then the way is opened for apparent contradictions between attitude and behaviour, and for considerable contextual variation in attitudes and behaviour."[42]

Similarly Newby argues that:

> "the beliefs of workers are much more fragmented and incoherent than has generally been allowed, so that instead of concentrating upon the attitudinal attributes of individuals from which their putative behaviour is then inferred, it becomes more important to study the

situational factors which typically confront these individuals, and how these affect the nature of the relationships in which they are engaged."[43]

One of the ways in which the complex texture of changing experience and competing perspectives is addressed in these studies is in terms of the interplay of different patterns of biographical experience. For example Cousins and Brown suggest that it is possible to discern some relationship between specific variants of imagery and particular patterns of experience among the shipbuilders: for instance there is some contrast between those young skilled workers who seemed able to play the labour market, who tended to adopt the three (or more) class model already mentioned, with themselves in the middle; and a relatively young stable grouping of workers whose three (or more) class model placed themselves in the large bottom group and, unlike many in the shipyards, identified white-collar workers as a distinct group.[44] Thus the nuanced and varied repertoire of imagery identified by these researchers could be grounded to some degree in different labour market and workplace experiences within shipbuilding, though the resulting patterns of attitudes and actions appear quite paradoxical: the grouping that was least likely to endorse the view of the enterprise as a team and least likely to be critical of strikes was also least solidaristic and least likely to vote Labour.[45] (Similar, though less developed, suggestions about the significance of distinctive work biographies, are made in several of the other essays).[46] It would be possible to argue that the discrimination of images associated with different biographical junctures and labour market strategies, such as those pointed up in this contrast between 'cowboys' and 'royals' within the shipyards, might form part of Lockwood's elaboration of variables. However, this would fail to grasp how such heterogeneous and contradictory forms of imagery do not merely correspond to a more complex array of variables, but arise in a looser and more open-ended manner in the course of individual and collective strategies within the contradictory dynamics of employment relations. It is in such terms that Cousins and Brown assess the changing potentials of 'latent proletarianism' in the face of shipyard rationalisation; or Martin and Fryer speculate that the somewhat equivocal deference which they found at Casterton was related to the experience of recent redundancy among a previously stable workforce.[47]

It is in this context that Lockwood's rather casual recognition that his typology was founded on a conceptualisation which ignored the "structural

properties of work organisations", a feature very much in line with the limited treatment of production relations in the Affluent Worker study itself, is so damaging[48]. For this omission entails the virtual absence of analysis of the social relations of the immediate production process, except in terms of distinctive patterns of workplace sociability, in this, the classic post-war sociological characterisation of different patterns of experience and imagery within the British working class. Furthermore, to suggest, as Lockwood does, that this limitation can be repaired by identifying such structural variables as size and "degree of bureaucratisation of the productive unit", or by following several of the contributors in describing "the work situation in their own, better terms", glosses over the need to analyse the dynamics of these employment relationships rather than simply adding descriptive variation to the ideal types[49]. This is not to suggest that there is any simple recipe for such an analysis of employment and production relations, especially in view of the apparently rather different implications of the restructuring of capital for the social organisation of production in different sectors; a feature indicated in these studies by the contrasting developments in shipbuilding and agriculture, charted by Cousins and Brown and by Bell and Newby respectively[50]. However each of their analyses move away from a static ideal-type characterisation of clusters of variables, precisely to address the dynamics of employment and production relations which generate many of the similarities and differences in the experience of different groupings within the working class. Similarly this is a central concern of the marxian workplace studies discussed later in this chapter, though again, as will be seen, they do not provide any very developed analysis of the ways in which variations in work experience are composed out of the basic dynamic of relations between capital and labour.

While the specific studies of shipbuilding and agribusiness begin to analyse the contradictory changes in the social organisation of production wrought by such developments as the re-division and simplification of labour on the one hand, and the increasing concentration and capital intensity of units of production on the other, the more general debate surrounding the conception of the 'traditional worker' had little to say about the transformation of the capitalist labour process. However, the dynamics of employment relations did become a central topic in one respect, namely in terms of labour as a commodity and the impact of market relations on the particularities of specific experiences of employment. This is the

underlying theme of several of the discussions of the dynamics of employers' strategies, which focus on the disruption and decline of settled paternalistic relations between employers and their work people, and emerges as a central element of Westergaard's critique, and of the arguments of Blackburn and Mann and Cousins and Davis[51].

Labour as a Commodity and the Conceptualisation of Market Relations

The impact of market relations is central to Westergaard's argument that Lockwood's concern with the 'micro-structural' features of community and employment, which might define the peculiarities of the experience of different working class milieux, has diverted attention away from 'macro-structural' features which cut across such local particularities. Against such preoccupation with local difference Westergaard argues that:

> "the importance of macro-structural features has been and is increasing by comparison with local community and workplace conditions - the importance, that is, of large-scale market forces and of the national, even international, socio-political context of events."[52]

Thus he claims not only that it is such 'macro-structural' features which counterpoint the pressures towards parochialism which arise from the immediate exigencies of everyday needs and local resources, fueling the more universalistic visions of the labour movement, but also that in contemporary society such features are more rather than less compelling.

The background to this argument is provided by the wider analysis, in Westergaard and Resler, of the manner in which corporate property ownership and the exigencies of the market generate and sustain systematic and profound class inequalities in British society.[53] In this context Westergaard insists that "the complexity of detail" should not "obscure the simplicity of the picture as a whole", where the dependence of the mass of wage earners on the sale of their labour in the market defines for them a shared position which stands in marked contrast with that of the owners of private capital.[54] It is within these parameters that the common features of wage labour are becoming increasingly apparent, as markets for labour become extended and more uniform, collective bargaining works with broader referents, there is a continuing growth and concentration of corporate enterprise, and the government becomes increasingly interventionist in the economic, and especially industrial relations sphere. Under these conditions "workers of

all grades and kinds, and in all industries, are now more liable than they were to share certain basic conditions in their economic terms of life."[55] Westergaard's analysis of the implications of these developments neatly reverses the diagnosis of the Affluent Worker study and the Lockwood typology. The increasing uniformity and transparency of market conditions means the erosion of older parochialisms and an increasingly exposed and brittle 'cash nexus', as recurrent rounds of concentration and rationalisation confront the mounting economic aspirations of wage workers, and as a result the institutions of the labour movement and collective bargaining face the conflicting pressures of wider rank and file militancy and more constraining state intervention to protect profitability.[56] In these circumstances wider class horizons, increasing scepticism and criticism directed at established institutions, and a greater willingness to resort to various forms of direct action develop within the working class, though each of these developments remain partial and limited. At a minimum the increased exposure of the cash nexus and the ensuing struggles are:

> "liable to turn 'economism' into something more; at least where there is a stubborn, though patchy foundation of quasi-socialist counter-ideology within the labour movement to effect the translation".[57]

Before looking more critically at Westergaard's prognosis I want to add a brief comment on Lockwood's response to the initial version of this argument. Firstly he pronounces himself sceptical about the radicalising potential of the shifting impact of market forces, and secondly he argues that the development of common citizenship rights is likely to have been more central in the development of wider horizons of working class action, both in terms of national patterns of class accomodation and in terms of the emergence of fresh aspirations for economic equality.[58] This latter claim raises wider issues of considerable importance about the interplay of class relations in the market, production and civil society, but such issues go well beyond the bounds of this thesis.[59] I simply want to note that the conception of social relations of production which I outlined in my introduction implies a recognition of the significance of class awareness and organisation directed towards claims for, and the winning of, political and citizenship rights, but it suggests that such developments must not be divorced from class relations in the market and employment. In relation to the issues discussed by Westergaard it is certainly the case that the dynamics of conflict over incomes policy have been strongly influenced by the social organisation of political representation, particularly the form

It is against this background of an over-simple emphasis on homogenisation that his references to the concern of Nineteenth century reformers to "fragment the wage-earning population and turn workers' loyalties inwards towards locality instead of class" through the establishment of model suburbs or villages has been misread as evidence of a wider conspiracy theory of capitalist control[66]. The strengths and weaknesses of Westergaard's account of the significance and impact of shared labour market position on the experience and consciousness of wage workers can be clarified further by considering the ways in which such other contributors to the debate as Blackburn and Mann and Davis and Cousins develop related arguments.

I will return to Mann's more general arguments about the contradictory experience and consciousness of wage workers later in this chapter, but here I intend to consider how he and Blackburn interpret the evidence of their Peterborough labour market survey. Their central theme is that:

> "we have been looking only at one part of the labour market, but a very substantial part, including the majority of male manual workers [elsewhere estimated at between three-quarters and four-fifths], where we found an essentially interchangable mass of workers selling only simple labourpower. This is not to deny the heterogeneity of manual jobs, but we have shown that, for two reasons, this is no basis for stable stratification. Firstly, much allocation of workers to jobs is unpredictable. Secondly, the main predictable criterion is seniority. Thus each worker has a reasonable chance of experiencing that heterogeneity within his own workcareer. Manual workers are thus homogeneous in their experience of heterogeneity!"[67]

This 'quasi-Marxist conclusion' from Weberian premises, as Blackburn and Mann themselves characterise it, parallels Westergaard's broader argument, but is more explicit in emphasising the 'second order' character of the homogeneity involved.[68] They emphasise that uncertainty, insecurity and an inability to control their fate overshadow the minor variations in such things as wages or work autonomy which offer small trade-offs in the external labour market, or the advantages accrued in employer-controlled job ladders. In addition these features of turbulence and uncertainty, pinpointed in a snap-shot view of the labour market, would, as they recognise, be compounded by further evidence of unpredictable and uncontrollable outcomes when a longer view of the rise, decline and demise of specific departments, firms or sectors was considered.[69] However, the implications of such 'second order' homogeneity for workers' perspectives and consciousness are seen rather differently by Blackburn and Mann compared with Westergaard. For they argue that within the chaotic flux of the non-skilled labour market the most ...

of mass working class representation in parliament, as well as the character of other aspects of the organisation and activity of the state apparatus[60]. In this context different notions of political representation and citizenship will come into play and inform the actions of the protagonists. However, this would hardly justify isolating conceptions of citizenship as the crucial motors of widening economic and industrial demands, apart from the wider dynamic of class and market relations discussed by Westergaard. Indeed Westergaard's fuller treatment of the intensification of industrial conflict in the late 1960s and early 1970s makes clear that he is concerned with the interplay of class relations in the economy and as they are mediated through the state, and not only with an analysis of market relations[61].

Leaving aside Lockwood's remark about class organisation around citizenship, and the broader issues it raises, it is certainly appropriate to direct critical attention at Westergaard's emphasis on the market. There is a tendency for Westergaard's discussion of employment relations to resolve into an account of the trajectory of market processes, and this account suffers from some of the weaknesses which have been diagnosed in so-called Manifesto marxism[62]. In particular it leans very heavily on the argument that the generalisation of market relations brings the cash nexus to the fore, in a manner which provides a rather unilinear account of the dissolution of motley localistic ties, the generation of homogeneity among wage workers, and the widening of horizons of class consciousness[63]. Westergaard recognises continuing heterogeneity among wage workers — "dependence itself conduces to fragmentation, the labour market in effect is a patchwork of markets" — and, of course, presents a heavily qualified and open-ended view of the potentials for radicalisation[64]. However, such qualifications serve only to dilute the Manifesto marxism, rather than moving beyond it. In part this may be because of the parallelism between such arguments and those arising from the Weberian tradition and embedded in the Affluent Worker analysis in the form of the traditional-to-market trajectory: at key points Westergaard simply reverses the significance of this trajectory. As a result his analysis works with a predominantly market rather than production centred account of class relations without recognising the one-sidedness involved, and also fails to address the uneven and incomplete development of the market processes which are highlighted. One consequence of this is that his account focusses on the increasing significance of macro-structural trends which are set against and overrule micro-structural features, without exploring the manner in which such broader processes as market competition and corporate policies may generate forms of local differentiation as well as uniformity[65].

salient features for workers, apart from those of confusion and contradiction already noted, are likely to be on the one hand the apparently uncontestable nature of market forces which act as constraints not only on workers but also on employers, and on the other hand an appreciation of the small choices and 'windfall' gains which <u>are</u> available.[70] It is these features which reinforce a pragmatic accomodation to circumstance and fragmented perspectives among their sample, rather than any incipient generalising radicalism of the sort suggested by Westergaard.

However, the greater specificity of Blackburn and Mann's treatment of 'second order' labour market homogeneity immediately raises questions about the adequacy of an emphasis on ubiquitous flux. How far are divergences in the experience of such features as the constraining and unpredictable character of market forces, or opportunities of relative advantage, simply transient or rather more enduring? In part the emphasis on ubiquitous flux is a consequence of the focus on the male non-skilled labour market, and the exclusions this involves. For, as Blackburn and Mann themselves acknowledge, this sampling excludes from consideration two of the more enduring (though not absolute) lines of differentiation of labour market experience within the working class: that between apprenticed craftsmen and other male manual workers, and that between male and female manual workers. Again, as they suggest, such divisions do not constitute absolute ruptures within the working class: in the first case because of such overlaps as those represented by 'dilution' or by the peaks of internal job ladders; in the second because of the pooling of divergent experiences within the working class family, as well as some overlap with the more disprivileged groups of male workers.[71] However, against these points, which represent valid criticisms of any model of total job segregation, must be set a recognition that these <u>are</u> relatively enduring bases of divergent experience in terms of uncertainty, constraint, control and advantage. As such the patterns of consciousness, of both market constraints and potentials for advance and advantage, cannot simply be reduced to the lowest common denominator of defensive accomodation invoked by the Peterborough researchers. Moreover, even within their own more uniform sample there is evidence of significant and not simply transient variations in sectional organisation, advantage and counter-control; though their concern with the labour market and work careers, rather than collective bargaining and shifts in the social organisation of production, leaves such features virtually unexplored.[72] In particular, then, the research focus directs attention away from those circumstances, involving sectional collective action, where workers articulate partial challenges to 'given' market forces and management prerogatives.

Towards the end of their analysis Blackburn and Mann do begin to address this question of sectional collective action, when they criticise 'radical' dual labour market theorists for resorting to conspiratorial accounts of management 'divide-and-rule' tactics to explain divisions within the working class. Against this they argue that sectional organisation, to protect relative advantage in the face of uncertainty and change, will be a normal feature of capitalism:

> "because capitalism is competitive and unpredictable, no one's place is secure. Firms rise and fall; so do national economies. Thus established workers universally seek to protect themselves against another, and potentially surplus, labour supply. Trade unions are the inevitable protective organisations, for by their very nature they collectively organise workers 'already there'. Intra-class conflict is thus the historical norm within capitalism."[73]

Furthermore, such intra-class conflict takes two dominant forms - general factory and firm-based bargaining, and negotiation of seniority-based job ladders - and "both divert potential class action, the first into 'free collective bargaining' which can only reinforce the market nature of capitalism, and the second into an essentially conservative posture of sitting tight and quiet, waiting for promotion."[74] Thus, where the generalised flux of the labour market does not undercut sectional advantage and organisation (and Blackburn and Mann do not really confront the shift in emphasis involved in recognising the relatively long-term stabilisation of market position which might be involved), trade unionism will sustain a more institutionalised compromised relationship and pragmatic outlook.

Clearly this characterisation of trade unionism captures important elements of its basis and rationale.[75] However, what is missing is any sense of the ways in which the modest efficacy of collective organisation may sustain real gains for workers through <u>active struggle</u> over relatively long periods, and <u>against</u> the initiatives of employers and the apparent imperatives of the market.[76] By assimilating sectional organisation to the patterns of individual accomodation to the flux of the labour market most illuminated by their research strategy, and by giving minimal attention to management-worker conflict within the production process, they fail to address those features of trade unionism which may nurture less accomodating practices and perspectives. Thus Blackburn and Mann provide a more sophisticated account of the interplay of homogeneity and heterogeneity of labour market experience, but one which is ultimately flawed by an overstatement of the sheer chaos of the market and a related one-sidedness in the treatment of trade union organisation and consciousness.

Davis and Cousins share some of the preoccupations of Blackburn and Mann, in particular their concern with flux and insecurity in the labour market, and their emphasis on the compulsive character of market forces for both employers and workers.[77] They develop the first point in the following way:

> "historically, lack of homogeneity results in the changing position of working class groups as much as the mere existence of these groups ....patterns of working class identification, even if heterogeneous, are not necessarily fixed. The argument arising out of lack of homogeneity cannot then distract from, and indeed may in a sense actually support, the view that the fundamental reality of the working class situation is that labour is a commodity."[78]

So far as the second point is concerned they emphasise that the system of commodity production embeds workers, individually and collectively, within a wider network of commodity exchange on which, as producers and consumers, they are dependant. However, their investigation of the historical development of trade unionism in the Northumberland coalfield in the second half of the last century - a development marked by major migrations to new pits, sharp fluctuations in the membership and fortunes of the union, development of sliding-scale agreements, and increasing community cooperative activity and political involvement - prompts them to develop these arguments about the implications of the commodity status of labour in a way which differentiates their position from those of other authors discussed above.

In relation to the theme of turbulence in the labour market they argue, against Goldthorpe and Lockwood, that this has been a recurrent feature of the experience of wage workers within capitalism, so that instrumentalism, economism and rank and file militancy have been characteristic of earlier as well as contemporary groupings within the working class.[79] "The so-called 'old' working class areas have in the past been boom areas like Luton and have shown much the same characteristics": for example, with the influx of migrating workers into the new pit villages of an expanding coalfield.[80] However, this perspective not only challenges the ahistorical 'history' embodied in the notion of the 'traditional' worker; it also represents an implicit critique of both Westergaard and Blackburn and Mann. For what Davis and Cousins suggest is an uneven counterpoint of periods of relative stabilisation and periods of intensified instability and uncertainty, rather than a more or less unilinear rise of the cash nexus (Westergaard) or an apparently transhistorical flux (Blackburn and Mann).[81] Furthermore, unlike the latter, they recognise that quite long-term gains can be made through

collective organisation on the terrain provided by such historical developments, so that sectional action and heterogeneity, though not fixed, may be more significant than these other commentators allow. In this sense it could be said that Davis and Cousins identify only a 'third order' homogeneity, similar to that emphasised in Hyman's more recent discussion of the common denominators of insecurity and struggle underlying varieties and shifts of occupational experience, when they argue:

> "that the uncertainties of working-class identification and the irregularities of working-class experience might be held to result from the uncertainties accompanying labour's commodity status."[82]

In addition they relate such cycles of relative stability and turbulence to central, and contradictory, features of trade unionism. Their account of the development of Northumberland miners' unionism traces the manner in which that unionism built upon, and contributed to, phases of stabilisation, as collective bargaining was institutionalised around a recognition, in parallel with the employers, of the imperatives of the market, particularly through sliding-scale agreements. However, they also recognise the uneven and problematical character of such developments. Firstly they point out that such stabilisation is an unsettled process, and it is precisely in periods of flux that more radical demands and episodes of militancy gain ground.[83] Secondly they also bring out the ways in which working class organisations do not simply conform to the dictates of the market, but also seek to escape from them (through community cooperation) or subdue them (through political action).[84] Thus the logics of trade unionism are more open-ended and contradictory, though the dominant motif - certainly in this period for the Northumberland Miners, and by implication more generally - remains one of accomodation. In sum:

> "outright oppositional policies risk the collapse of the organisational means of opposition so painfully built up; outright integrative policies mean the acceptance of unacceptably large cuts in pay which it is one of the main purposes of the organisation to resist. Economism implies the attempt to regulate and socially control market forces; the coal owners both attempt to 'incorporate' and 'dis-incorporate' the union according to their own economic exigencies....the means of resistance are themselves dependent; and the means of dependence are not unconditional and can generate opposition."[85]

Thus Cousins and Davis provide a more analytically developed, and less unilinear account of the bases of the contradictory practice and consciousness of wage workers than that offered by Westergaard, while retaining his sense of some openendedness and radical potentials in the play of those contradictory elements. In some ways their focus on the commodity status

of labour allows them to escape from the rigidities of much orthodox marxian analysis, particularly insofar as they direct attention to the ways in which the economic and political organisation of wage workers may make real gains within capitalism, operating in and against the market.[86] On the other hand their tendency to simply subsume the capital-labour relation into the generality of commodity relations leads them to gloss over the centrality of class conflict within the production process, as this conditions both the cyclical character of economic activity and the contradictions of organisation and consciousness which are their focus. Nevertheless, within a short compass they provide the most suggestive of these market-based analyses of unities and divisions, and patterns of organisation and consciousness, among the British working class.

So far in this section of the chapter I have traced the way in which the debate over Lockwood's typology led from a concern with a cluster of situational variables and related social imagery to analyses of the dynamics of employment relations and the contradictory forms of organisation and consciousness which develop within those relations. I have also examined several attempts to analyse the dynamics of employment relations in terms of the commodity status of labour, and have suggested that any diagnosis of a simple homogeneity and unity within the working class on that basis is mistaken. However the work of these authors, limited though it is by minimal attention to class struggle within the production process, nevertheless indicates the complex interplay of divisions and shared experience, relative stabilisation and underlying insecurity, which must be grasped in any attempt to locate the experience of different occupational and industrial groupings within the overall patterning of working class experience. In these respects what I have called the second and third order conceptions of homogeneity are compatible with the stronger emphasis on heterogeneity and division in such formulations as that quoted in my introduction, taken from Richard Johnson's critique of Manifesto marxism:

> "the expansion and the movements of capital do not simply unify and massify labour, even in the direct relations of production. Rather, the working class is continuously recomposed around major internal structurations. These internal divisions - within factories, within industries, between occupations, between the sexes and between the employed and the reserve armies - ought to be an object of any primary theory of the working class. We need to start, indeed, politically and theoretically, not from the assumption of simplification and unity but from that of complexity and division."[87]

At the same time their attention to the dynamics of the processes involved

underlines the precariousness of some of these divisions, and the shifts as well as the stabilities involved in their 'continuous recomposition', and thus serves to guard against the incipient essentialism of Johnson's focus upon heterogeneity.

Alongside this elaboration of an understanding of homogeneity and heterogeneity within the working class I have also considered the manner in which these commentators have sought to theorise the complex and contradictory forms of consciousness and action identified in the empirical studies of social imagery. As has been seen, Blackburn and Mann emphasise the self-limiting character of working class consciousness and action. However the other commentators challenge this so-called 'impossibilist' diagnosis and go on to argue, fairly modestly, for rather more open possibilities of radicalisation in view of the contradictory but sometimes critical and innovative features of collective organisation, activity, aspirations and ideologies[88]. I will return to these contrasting assessments in the conclusion to this chapter, but before doing so I need to review some of the more detailed studies of workers' experience, organisation and perspectives which followed up these questions during the 1970's. Among these studies were some which explicitly continued to take Lockwood's arguments as their main point of departure, while others, in particular the marxian ethnographies of work, focussed more directly on class struggle in the workplace and the limits and possibilities of shop-floor unionism. In the remainder of this chapter I will look first at three studies which take on Lockwood's arguments and the related debate fairly directly, those of Hill on London dockers, Moorhouse and Chamberlain on council tenants during a 'rent strike', and Howard Davis on the 'social consciousness' of three relatively advantaged groupings of workers; and following that I will round out my discussion by reviewing two major marxian ethnographies[89].

Experience, Organisation and Consciousness among London Dockers

Hill's study of London dockers represents the most direct continuation of the debate about the 'traditional worker', for as an investigation of an archetypal 'traditional proletarian' occupation it constitutes a direct test of Lockwood's conceptualisation of the milieu and consciousness of such groups and of the wider typological contrast between 'traditional' and 'modern' elements of the British working class. So far as imagery and consciousness are concerned he provides a further case-study which echoes many of the themes of the earlier studies, but in particular develops an argument about critical disjunctions between different foci of class

consciousness in the industrial and in the political arenas. Secondly the study offers some evidence on the changing character of employment relations in this specific sector and period (London docks in the late 1960s and early 1970s); and in doing so points up the real but ultimately precarious gains made by the dockers, through a combination of state regulation with union involvement and active workplace organisation, during the post-war period and especially in the late 1960s. This once more raises the issue of the character and implications of relative gains won by well-organised workers within specific corners of the labour market. Finally Hill enlists his material in support of an emphasis on the homogeneity of working class consciousness and experience, though through my discussion of his detailed arguments I will raise some doubts about this claim.

Hill's analysis of attitudes and imagery is primarily concerned to challenge the stereotype identification of dockers as possessors of a 'traditional proletarian consciousness'. For this purpose he focusses on the pattern of dominant responses among his sample on a variety of topics, rather than any detailed exploration of the range and texture of attitudes, but within the limits of this procedure is able to indicate a quite complex admixture of views. Thus, in relation to questions of social imagery and inequality, he charts the dominance of a fairly coherent radical perspective on power and inequality; majority choice of a money model of social imagery, with power an explicit feature in only a minority among the range of views; and widespread expectations of future material advance and, for their children, technical and white-collar jobs[90]. In regard to employment relations he diagnoses the dominance of a 'harmonistic' view of management-worker relations; very widespread support for shop-stewards as lubricants of industrial relations in pursuit of workers' interests; very strong commitment to worker solidarity within, and to a lesser extent beyond, the docks; and a widespread belief that trade union involvement in management was a good idea, not least because it would mitigate managerial incompetence[91]. At the same time these features co-existed with more mixed views about union power in society, with 40 per cent of dockers seeing such power as too great; and they were coupled with criticism of the role and representativeness of local union officialdom[92]. Finally, as far as party politics were concerned Hill's dockers were very predominantly Labour voters, but there was significant scepticism about the efficacy of changes in party rule, and quite widespread hostility to the formal links between Labour and the trade unions[93].

Within this complex pattern Hill found more coherence across the views on power and inequality than did Blackburn and Mann in their study, but beyond that he found little evidence of any coherent relationship between 'industrial', 'social' and 'political' aspects of consciousness. Thus on the one hand his findings give little support to diagnoses of a coherent, oppositional, politicised radicalism among these workers; while on the other he suggests that, particularly in terms of social imagery and the issues of union power and union-party links, there were strong parallels with the Luton study, thus undermining the contrast conceptions of the Lockwood typology. Hill summarises much of his evidence in terms of the existence of an "inchoate form of social awareness" characterised by disjunctions between views on different topics:

> "it is clear that the 'Left' position with regards to social inequality and power does <u>not</u> imply a particular conception of employment relations nor support for the role of trade unionism. The coherence of the various different strands which are thought to make up a radical proletarian image of society is missing among these dock workers and foremen. The people interviewed in this research appeared to have their views fairly well compartmentalised, so that a particular view about one aspect of society did not predict views about others"[94].

Such an emphasis on compartmentalisation gives a distinctive twist to the more widespread arguments about inchoate or contradictory consciousness.

However this theme of compartmentalisation may be rather misleading as it stands, for the relationships between the different elements are not very fully explored and do not appear to involve equivalent forms of disjunction. I have already noted the argument that the 'money idiom' in social imagery may be sufficiently loose to accomodate a thematic awareness of power, and I will return to this point in discussing the work of Moorhouse and Chamberlain[95]. In this context Hill is himself explicitly tentative in his interpretation of social imagery, and he professes agnosticism on the issue of how far the money idiom may be a superficial discourse in this sense[96]. Again, he also recognises that the judgements of 'harmonistic' employment relations are conditioned by the effective entrenchment of substantial elements of workplace counter-control; and since they co-exist with an emphasis on solidarity, the right to higher pay at the expense of profits, and the need to combat managerial incompetence, it seems perverse to read such judgements as discordant with the 'left' attitudes on inequalities of power and resources[97]. Such points do not suggest that there is any simple coherence among these views, not least

because my comments must fall back upon the aggregate patterns of attitudes rather than exploring the different currents of opinion which may lie beneath Hill's correlation exercise, but they do underline the complexity of any assessment of coherence or disjunction among views and attitudes which are differently framed by generalised idioms or specific situational exigencies.

Such considerations direct attention to the remaining disjunction charted by Hill: that between attitudes about social power and workplace collectivism on the one hand and the scepticism about wider trade union power and, especially, the union-Labour Party link on the other. In view of the points I have made in the previous paragraph I regard this disjunction as the critical component in his more general argument about the compartmentalisation of consciousness. In his examination of this specific tension or disjunction he considers two related types of explanation, one hinging on the impact of a dominant ideology and the other concerned with the institutional distancing and separation of different foci of labour movement activity[98]. Though he does not push either of these arguments very far in The Dockers they nevertheless repay examination, not only because it is then possible to pinpoint some further weaknesses of his explanation and understanding of compartmentalised consciousness, but also because they represent the outlines of a position which he has continued to develop elsewhere[99]. So far as the dominant ideology argument is concerned, he notes that the contrast between answers to general and to specific questions about unionism might be construed as a contrast between (i) the rehearsal of dominant ideological themes in the abstract, and (ii) the articulation of subordinate or oppositional values in the specific understanding of immediate experience. However, such an approach, whatever the nuances, must operate with some sense of false or distorted consciousness arising out of a clash between dominant ideology and experience, whereas Hill is at pains to emphasise that each of these perspectives is "equally valid and 'real'"[100]. This emphasis clearly subordinates the dominant ideology argument to the second type of explanation of compartmentalisation, since it rests not simply on a weberian stance on values and consciousness but more particularly on an implied correspondence between institutional and ideological separations. This second explanation focusses on the ways in which the processes of central organisation, political representation and alliance are institutionally distant from rank and file preoccupations[101]. Thus the institutional separation of day-to-day workplace relations from the organisational logic of the unions and the Labour Party provides scope

for the activation of dominant ideological themes which may be seen less as distortions of consciousness than registers of this distance, or at most the ideological filling of a vacant space.

In some respects this analysis is a valuable antidote to crude versions of a dominant ideology argument, which often fail to explain the bases for the adoption of ideas which are ostensibly antithetical to the interests of those involved. In so doing it points towards a concern with the material constraints and institutional disjunctions which may underpin 'pragmatic acceptance' or 'trade union consciousness', in ways which parallel the arguments of Mann on the one side and many marxist commentators on the other[102]. However, in other respects this aspect of Hill's analysis remains deficient, in particular because it implies that the "hostility to the extra-industrial aspects of union behaviour and the rejection of the notion of a united politico-industrial movement" is a rather settled affair, a negative register of institutional distance[103]. According to Hill this means, paradoxically, that on the docks the most detailed criticisms of union performance focus on the inadequacies of local union officialdom, while the "consequences of the alliance /between unions and Labour/ rarely meet with disapproval"[104]. What appears to be missing from such arguments is any real recognition that the detailed criticisms of local performance may involve or imply adverse judgements of some of the consequences of that alliance. As such the hostility to the union-Labour link among the dockers may be fueled not simply by institutional distance but also by negative experiences of the consequences, be they the use of troops as strike-breakers as in 1948 (Hill recognises the powerful institutional memory which is reinforced by kin-based recruitment); the sometimes compromised role of the TGWU in the administration of discipline through the Docks Labour Board; the specific terms of the post-Devlin rationalisation plans; or the incomes restraints sought by the Labour Governments of the 1960s. Certainly some of the leading figures within the unofficial 'stewards' organisation on the docks articulated a 'hostility' and 'rejection' in very much these terms, not towards wider political and organisational horizons as such, but more specifically towards the dominant Labourist forms of that alliance; and such figures gained considerable support among dockworkers, not simply for their grievance activity but sometimes for their opposition to these Labourist forms[105].

I do not wish to suggest that Hill has glossed over some generalised politicised hostility to Labourism, but rather to argue that the institutionalised separation between workplace unionism and union officialdom or

Labour politics takes specific, unsettled and contested forms which may be understood in diverse ways, including a-political bloody-mindedness, varied forms of political cynicism, and revolutionary politics. The workplace politics of the London dockers seems likely to have involved both interweaving and contention among these different strands of interpretation, though this remains invisible within Hill's analysis. Indeed, both the tensions in the institutionalised disjunction between 'economic' and 'political' wings of the labour movement, and the interplay of such different ways of understanding those tensions, could only be explored through more detailed studies of the dynamics of consciousness and action among dockers as they responded to changes in the organisation of their work and employment. It is worth adding that such studies would also have provided evidence for a fuller assessment of the real meaning and implications of the reported priority given to wages and living standards by these dockers[106].

Thus what I have sought to suggest in these critical comments is that Hill over-simplifies the pattern of compartmentalisation of views among these men, and in particular suggests too neat a division between industrial and political aspects of their evaluation of trade unionism and Labourism, though in so doing he rightly underlines the complexity of those views. This criticism has significant implications for two aspects of Hill's more general arguments, as they are advanced both in this monograph and in his later commentaries. Firstly it re-opens the question of the role of 'dominant ideology'. His work implies that this role must be construed either in the simplistic terms of a general imposition of a false consciousness or in more or less neutral terms, for example as filling a vacant ideological space created by the institutional distance of union and party centres from the workplace. My criticism implies that this is an overdrawn contrast which ignores the possibility of more complex ideological processes. Instead it invites attention to the ways in which the contradictory aspects and consequences of institutionalised trade unionism may one-sidedly be interpreted in terms of dominant ideological themes, while this in turn may lend those themes a vitality arising from resonance with aspects of lived experience[107].

Secondly this criticism puts a question-mark against Hill's identification of a homogeneous pattern of compartmentalised consciousness among wage-workers, with the attitudes of the dockers simply one variation on this theme[108]. His findings are certainly sufficient to challenge any

sharp contrasts of imagery tied directly to specific social milieux, of the sort embodied in Lockwood's original ideal-types. However the notion of variations on a theme is a rather elastic one, and without further exploration of the currents and cross-currents of argument and perspective among these workers it remains unclear how far some such variations may involve rather distinctive elements of occupational culture or specific amalgams of workplace collectivism and political perspective. As the Westergaard/Lockwood controversy about the distinctiveness or inter-penetration of 'imagery' and 'ideology' suggested, it would be mistaken to address these issues either in terms of the undiluted impact of the immediate experience of specific milieux or in terms of any simple subsumption into general patterns of class culture and politics[109].

Of course the shift away from 'milieux' towards the logic of collective organisation and institutionalised divisions within the labour movement, implicit in Hill's discussion of the bases of compartmentalised consciousness, itself highlights features which may underpin a common proletarian consciousness. Indeed many of the contradictory features of trade unionism which I have alluded to as the bases of tensions and dis-junctions in consciousness will be experienced in similar ways by many workers. Against this, though, my earlier discussion of the differing treatments of homogeneity and heterogeneity suggests that specific occupations or groupings of workers might, during specific periods, experience these features in rather different ways. In this regard it should be noted that, though Hill advances an argument about relative homogeneity of consciousness, his research highlights some quite distinctive features of the experience of work and collectivity among London dockers, especially during the 1960s; features which seem likely to have given a distinctive cast to their views of managers, labour markets, unions and state regulation in this period. As a final comment on his study I wish to underline some of the features of this distinctive experience which may be of particular significance.

As is well known, the docks had historically been characterised by a system of casual labour which meant extreme insecurity of employment for most men and the enhancement of the power of the foreman over workers. In the circumstances which prevailed after the war, with state regulation of the framework of casualism and a tighter labour market, the impact of insecure employment was somewhat mitigated. The gang system became rather less of a medium for supervisory cultivation of 'blue eyes' and rather more

of a basis for parochial collective action by dockers, though the piece-work system which was so often the focus of disputes remained a mechanism of indirect managerial control as well as serving as a resource in gang bargaining. Hill provides a useful discussion of aspects of these developments, particularly as they involved changes in the day-to-day relations between foremen and men and yet the continuing importance of tacit skills and experience in getting the job done[110]. At the same time his empirical preoccupation with the foremen, together with his interpretation of these developments in terms of a transition from traditional to modern bureaucratic forms of employment retarded by the persistence of traditional features, mean that he has little to say about the active reworking and changing emphases of labour traditions in the pre-Devlin period[111]. Thus he gives little attention to the ways in which the parochial solidarities of specific gangs or groupings, though sometimes buttressed by the skills he emphasises, were critically dependent on, and in turn gave renewed vitality to, wider patterns of solidarity. As Wilson emphasises, the post-war casual regime was made tolerable, and (because of the elements of autonomy involved) even attractive, to many dockers by the active interplay of sectional initiatives and wider solidarities, orchestrated through work-place culture and informal leadership much more than through the formal institutions of trade unionism[112].

The rationalisation and reform programme which followed in the wake of the Devlin Inquiry aimed to restructure employment relations through de-casualisation and productivity bargaining. However the decasualisation during Phase One of the reforms sharply curtailed the disciplinary prerogatives of foremen in advance of the major offensive on productivity; and in this context many dockers were able to gain higher wages, more relaxed work rates and more work autonomy against a background of improved job security. It is this period of exceptional advantage which is documented in some detail in Hill's monograph, and for this period he more clearly recognises that these gains were not simply organised through the precarious politics of the Dock Labour Scheme and Decasualisation, nor through the merely sectional exploitation of bargaining leverage[113]. Rather they reflected, more than anything else, considerable activity and leadership on the part of stewards, who were involved in the strategic interpretation of 'custom and practice', the generalisation of gains, and the regulation of new aspects of work organisation.

Thus Hill notes that in this period "both the men and stewards were

extremely active and aggressive in trying to extend the rules with regard to payment and that the stewards were ahead of the men on many occasions"[114]. As he argues, this did not simply mean that the stewards passively reflected the demands of their members. On the one hand "they had enough moral authority within the labour force to resist demands which they regarded as unreasonable, and to refuse to support the men against management", while on the other they sought to "ensure that new gains made by one gang were extended to all and that the creation of new 'custom and practice' rules was uniformly distributed throughout the firm"[115]. Such initiatives extended to the implementation of a rotation of workers through the new containerised sectors of work in the port, as well as the policing of more established work-sharing arrangements, and many of these activities were "designed to stop the individual benefiting at the cost of his mates and to prevent the emergence of a new blue-eyed stratum"[116]. Such features were exemplified by the organised trend towards the equalisation of earnings during the last eighteen months of Phase One:

> "This carried the work-sharing ethos to an egalitarian extreme, because it denied the right of some gangs to earn more than others for a higher output. Any gang which had high earnings was to be placed on low-paying cargoes until its earnings came into line with the average, and visa versa. This entirely negated the principle of payment by results. The trend was started in one large firm in the Royal Group, where the stewards were committed to the principle and managed to persuade the men to agree though many had initially opposed the idea. Stewards in other firms and docks took up the idea and some were successful in persuading their men to agree, though in at least one Tilbury firm the men vetoed the change when it was suggested. Managers certainly disliked equalisation, because it removed all the incentive effect from the payment system, but they found it difficult to resist when the stewards had the support of the men"[117].

Finally Hill registers the impact of the relocation of workers as docks were closed, jobs were lost, and companies merged. This both undermined the parochialism of work cultures and facilitated the generalisation of gains. At Tilbury, for instance:

> "the influx of men from the various upriver docks and wharves had brought with it a wide variety of new 'custom and practice' rules, which were based on those existing in the docks from which the men came. The accepted definitions of 'long runs' became shorter and 'dirty' cargoes became cleaner throughout London during Phase One"[118].

Such achievements underpinned the daily work experience of London dockers during this period, and are reflected not only in their perceptions of 'harmonious' employment relations but also in their judgements about the pros and cons of their sort of work. At this time few of the men Hill interviewed felt that they could better their pay outside the docks, they enjoyed the variety of existing dock work and the autonomy and discretion involved, and few felt pressured by the pace of work. At the same time, though, much of the work was quite tedious and repetitive, most of it involved substantial physical exertion, and the most interesting tasks were often the most arduous and dangerous[119]. Furthermore the rationalisation involved a continuing loss of jobs in the industry even while these workers had the security afforded by being 'registered dockers'. Thus these men enjoyed real advantages within the manual labour market, in wage levels, the extent of job control and 'leisure in work', and job security, but they had not escaped from the effort and tedium of manual work, or, ultimately, from its insecurity. Both the reality and the conditional character of the gains involved were underlined by the experience of the new work patterns on unitized berths. These involved more routinised, boring and isolated work but less physical effort, less 'health and safety' hazards, and potentially higher pay, and brought the pattern of dock work closer to that of much factory employment. For the time being a crucial feature of the implementation of the new working methods was that, though management had designed greater constraint into the equipment and organisation, work-place unionism had managed to gain substantial 'leisure in work' for the men as a counterpoint to such constraints[120]. While workers could sustain such controls, and spread the costs and gains of movement onto the new tasks through rotation, the shift represented a subtle but acceptable, even attractive, modification of the trade-offs within a somewhat advantaged working class occupation; though the restructuring involved rapidly threatened to erode such precarious advantage[121].

Hill recognises that his research documents a high-point in the gains made by workers on the docks, and in particular he notes that the continuing transformation of cargo handling was already changing the relationships between the port employers, the shippers, the state, and other sectors of capital by the end of the 1960s. By the early 1970s these developments were stiffening the resolve of the remaining port managements in their pursuit of productivity gains and job losses, while the wider process of relocation of work was circumventing the controls of state regulation and union participation; though this did not mean any simple dismantling of the gains

made by the dockers in the Scheme ports[122]. Thus the experience of the London dockers provides some vindication for the emphasis on turbulence and insecure gains in the labour market, common to the work of Westergaard and Resler, Blackburn and Mann, and Cousins and Davis. Moreover, since it reveals a relatively sustained period of advance through a combination of workplace and formal union activity, this experience provides further support for the characterisation developed by Cousins and Davis, rather than the first or second order conceptions of flux and insecurity developed by the other commentators. Finally, in relation to the Cousins and Davis discussion of collective organisation within, accomodating to, yet also against, the imperatives of the market, the dockers' experience emphasises both the centrality of workplace organisation and struggle, and the contradictory features of processes of state regulation and union participation operating in this context. Unfortunately Hill's research does not really explore the potentially distinctive dynamics of consciousness and action in these circumstances. Instead he contents himself with a demolition of the 'traditional proletarian' stereotype by emphasising the instrumentalism and compartmentalised consciousness of the modern docker, to the virtual exclusion of any concern with the specific forms these features may have taken on the docks.

Radical Themes in Social Consciousness: Two Contrasting Views

In this section I will follow up some of the issues raised by Hill by considering two studies which reach contrasting conclusions about radical strands in social consciousness: that of Chamberlain and Moorhouse who explore critical and radical themes of working class 'counter ideology' among a sample of London council tenants during a 'rent strike'; and that of Davis who finds little evidence of radicalism among three groupings of prosperous Scottish workers[123]. I will consider each of their arguments in turn.

By examining consciousness in the context of a 'rent strike' Moorhouse and Chamberlain provide a more focussed study of some of the dynamics of consciousness and action in a particular setting than do most of the studies discussed above (they also provide a useful reminder that these features are not confined to the production process). They report on how tenants responded to questions about class, politics and property (especially housing); and because they interviewed both withholders and non-withholders of rent, and some of each twice, they are able to make comparisons which at least provide useful pointers to the complex relations among attitudes, and between attitudes and actions, among their sample. Turning first to patterns of class imagery, Moorhouse reports that these tenants, like many other working class respondents, most often adopted a two or three-class view of society in which they placed

themselves at the bottom, along with the bulk of the population, and distinguished themselves from the top class on a mixture of criteria, of which aristocracy and land ownership on the one hand and money and wealth on the other were most often mentioned. On this basis these tenants held views closer to those of the Luton workers (and London dockers?) than those characterised as involving a 'latent proletarianism' among Wallsend shipyard workers[124]. However, Moorhouse presents two additional types of evidence about class imagery which suggest that the picture is more complicated. Firstly he reports that when asked specifically about power a very large majority of his sample said that the top class(es) had more power than others, with some evidence that the bulk of those saying this did not approve of the situation. This suggests that the language of 'land' and 'money' does not preclude judgements about the power of different classes: "in the majority of the images of our respondents a top class defined in terms of money and wealth was also identified as having power"[125]. Secondly he uses the evidence of the repeat interviews to follow a procedure rather different from the establishment of an overall 'gestalt' for each respondent, of the type sought by Goldthorpe and his colleagues. Rather he considers the differential stability of different aspects of the imagery within his sample, and reports the greatest consistency in self-identification with a large, less powerful lower class; less consistency in the number of classes identified, with twenty per cent of the respondents shifting between two and three class models; and least consistency in the criteria for and naming of the top class. In summary:

> "while the number of classes perceived might vary, while the names given to one's own class and, more especially, to the top class might change, and while the criteria dividing classes, while centred on money, might be added to or subtracted from, the perception that they belonged to a large class at the bottom of their class ranking did seem to be much more embedded....and most of our respondents were consistent in seeing that another, smaller, top class has more power than their class"[126].

On the basis of these findings Moorhouse argues that class imagery should be seen neither as a generally settled and consistent 'gestalt' nor as so amorphous or simplistic as to be meaningless. Rather, such imagery involves a flexible but probably adequate, and indeed accurate, appreciation of the most basic and salient features of class relations; despite the absence of some of the subtle distinctions striven for by social theorists (be they professional sociologists or professional revolutionaries)[127].

Against this background the attitudes of these tenants about the political process and about property and housing both provide significant evidence of a mixture of disenchantment and radicalism. Disenchantment emerges as a major theme in their views of the political process: the majority of the sample felt that 'ordinary people' did not have enough say in how the country was run, nor did they feel that voting gave them a say, while there was "a great deal of hostile comment about politicians and the British political system"[128]. Despite high levels of participation in voting, generally in support of the Labour Party, and a greater, though by no means overwhelming, tendency to regard the Labour Party as doing its best for 'ordinary people' compared with the Conservatives (fifty-two per cent as against only eleven per cent), a clear majority of the sample felt that it made little difference whether there was a Conservative or a Labour Government[129]. As Chamberlain and Moorhouse point out, such a pattern provides no support for those commentators who emphasise that the British working class exhibits an 'allegiant' political culture grounded in feelings of 'political efficacy', though it could more reasonably be interpreted as evidence of 'pragmatic accomodation' as would be implied by Hill's analysis or the broader argument advanced by Mann. However, Chamberlain and Moorhouse argue that the tensions in commitment to Labourism implicit in these responses suggest a more problematical, or in their terminology 'brittle' relationship than the terms 'pragmatic accomodation' suggest[130]. Moreover, the survey provides further evidence for an unsettled relationship. Alongside such general expressions of scepticism about the political process it documents a substantial current of dissent from the assertion of orthodox property rights, both in the housing sphere (where more than sixty per cent agree that until there are enough homes for all no one should have more than one, and approve of homeless families taking over empty property) and in the employment context (where forty-seven per cent approve of workers occupying factories when threatened with redundancy, and a large majority think workers should have a bigger say in how firms are run)[131]. Finally, linking such endorsement of direct action despite property rights to the scepticism about influence over governments, over a third of the sample regard 'collective action or solidarity' as the most effective way in which ordinary people can have some influence[132].

Moorhouse and Chamberlain acknowledge the partial and uneven character of commitment to 'radical' values among their sample. There are, for example, lower levels of support for the occupation of factories than houses; significant numbers of people support some of the 'orthodox' positions; and

only a minority of their sample formulate or endorse the most radical options[133]. Further evidence of the character of such uneven commitment to radical values is provided by the pattern of differences of opinion between those tenants who were withholders of rent during the rent strike and those who were non-withholders. On the one hand there is quite considerable overlap of opinions between these two groups, suggesting quite complex relationships between attitudes and actions in which heterodox ideas have quite wide currency. On the other hand there are suggestions of a contrast between more activist sentiments among the withholders and more fatalistic views among the non-withholders: the former are consistently more likely to give 'radical' answers, implying significant but not uncritical support for Labour coupled with an emphasis on the important role of direct action; while the latter are less positive on these counts, but more likely to feel there are no effective means to influence government and that the party in power makes little difference[134]. Unfortunately, though Chamberlain and Moorhouse consistently report these differences of opinion, they do little to analyse these differences for the light they might throw on the interplay of fatalistic and activist currents of opinion among these tenants in the context of a 'rent strike'.

Despite the unevenness of views among these tenants the overall pattern of responses clearly supports the critical conclusions drawn by the authors:

> "Firstly it reveals a series of oppositional and, often, aggressive attitudes by a majority of our respondents to the premise....that the ownership, use and rights of property should be allocated on the basis of market forces. Secondly, and an integral part of that opposition, there is a glimmering of another principle around which human society could distribute scarce resources, and this positive alternative principle is one that stresses the satisfaction of need rather than ability to pay"[135].

They go on to argue that, though "this alternative is embryonic, vague and incomplete", it forms, along with related views about collective action, "one tint in the variegated world-view of the lower class 'available' for use in certain micro and macro conflict situations"[136]. Thus, on the basis of their sample of tenants, Moorhouse and Chamberlain provide substantial evidence, and indeed one of the main sources, for Westergaard's argument that there exists among British workers a 'counter-ideology' which is, however, "an ideology of dissent....at half-cock"[137]. This diagnosis, whether couched in the terms used by Moorhouse and Chamberlain or those of Westergaard, raises two critical questions which I shall comment on to

round off my discussion of this study. Firstly, such characterisations pose the question of the potentials for action related to such part-formed counter-ideologies, which embody embryonic alternatives as one 'tint' within variegated and shifting perspectives. Secondly, the quite detailed evidence about these features in the context of a specific phase of conflict over rents raises the question of the extent to which such themes have a wider currency across a fuller range of working class experience.

In regard to potentials for action Moorhouse and Chamberlain argue more strongly (or clearly) than Westergaard that such 'half-cock' ideological themes may be quite sufficient as a basis for large scale mobilisation in the appropriate circumstances. Their 'optimistic' position on this issue is built on two interrelated arguments: on the one hand about the limited centrality of sophisticated intellectual doctrine in the genesis of radical action; and on the other about the clash between conceptions of need within such counter-ideologies and the resourcing of such needs within capitalism. Their argument on the first point is more developed than that on the second, and is in part grounded in an analysis of the role of the Labour Party which parallels that of Westergaard and Miliband[138]. Thus they argue that, in view of the limited record of the Labour Party in articulating radical positions and the widespread scepticism which is coupled with electoral support for Labour, it is more appropriate to see such counter-ideologies as being rooted in the experience and informal traditions of workers than to see them as dependent upon articulation by 'the party of the working class'[139]. Furthermore, they extend this critique beyond those authors, such as Parkin and Goldthorpe, who tie their contrasts of 'subordinate values' and 'radical party' to an emphasis on the potentially mobilising role of Labourism, to cast doubt on the more general preoccupation with the yardstick of intellectualised doctrine in assessing the potentials for class action, which these authors appear to share with orthodox (or possibly vulgar) Leninists[140]. Thus Moorhouse suggests that:

> "it is by no means clear that it is necessary for men [sic], at least the mass of men, to encompass society intellectually before they set about changing it"[141].

This argument is buttressed by the second theme mentioned above, by emphasising that partially articulated expectations rooted in distinctive experience and interests may persist or harden in the face of frustration, for example by diminishing provisions in housing or jobs. Thus Moorhouse and Chamberlain also attack those commentators, such as Mann or Hill, who emphasise the enduring character of fragmented consciousness and pragmatic

accomodation, for:

> "pragmatic acceptance is conditional, to some extent on the continued gratification of immediate expectations"[142].

These brief and general arguments provide a valuable antidote to the claims of 'vulgar Leninism', whether in sociological or marxian guise, as well as a reminder of the complex and shifting relationships between experience, consciousness and action suggested by the detailed research material of the Barking survey. At the same time such arguments appear to fall back on an implicit assumption that a pristine, though inchoate, radicalism tends to arise automatically out of working class experience as an expression of class interests -- an assumption which is reminiscent of the formulae of 'manifesto marxism', but which, as I have suggested earlier, must oversimplify the contradictory character of class experience and immediate interests[143]. However, it should be noted that Moorhouse and Chamberlain also recognise a complex interplay of experience and political organisation in the formation of interests and perspectives. Thus on the one hand they do not want to deny some <u>negative</u> role for Labour, most likely as "an agent of social control, as an institutionalised and now silted channel of protest", while on the other hand they allow that workers "may turn increasingly towards those who do offer them radical alternatives, or at least claim to", groups to the left of Labour[144]. It is notable, then, that Moorhouse steers between the optimistic emphasis on automatic escalation of class consciousness and action, characteristic of 'manifesto marxism', and the pessimistic emphasis on leadership from without in class mobilisation, classically formulated by Kautsky and adopted by Lenin. Thus he concludes that:

> "it would seem that those who draw up schemes of working class consciousness must allow for three groups with three types of consciousness: a radical leadership, a small proportion of class conscious workers, and a relatively large proportion of discontented and alienated workers. Even then their impressive constructions will have to come to terms with the dynamism of both social arrangements and the implications of widespread attitudes"[145].

In regard to such questions, though, the Barking study offers few answers. Moorhouse and Chamberlain note the apparent absence of far left activists from the housing estates where the rent strike took place, but they do not discuss the forms of mobilisation and activity which <u>were</u> involved in the strike; and as I have already noted they do not explore the interplay between activist and fatalistic sentiments among the tenants which is glimpsed in

their comparisons of the attitudes of withholders and non-withholders[146].

In summary, then, Moorhouse and Chamberlain use their material to develop a fuller appreciation of the character of radical strands of counter-ideology among wage-workers, and suggest that most commentators have underestimated the potential role of such strands in promoting radical action. However, they recognise the complex interplay between diffuse radical perspectives, changing experiences, and leadership and activism, and thus leave open and unresolved many questions concerning the relationship between the popular attitudes they have documented and any extensive political mobilisation. These larger issues of the dynamics of ideas and action, expectations and experience, cross-cut the remaining question posed by their study, that concerned with the typicality of such sentiments among workers.

One of the implications of the authors' own arguments is that radical themes will have varying currency and consequences among different groupings of workers in different circumstances. In that sense Moorhouse and Chamberlain argue against any simple generalisation from the example of a grouping of council tenants facing a substantial, central-government orchestrated, rent-rise in a period of more general industrial unrest. However, they do argue that there is evidence of elements of 'counter-ideology' and radicalism among workers more generally. Thus they note not only the apparently widespread occurrence of subterranean expressions of disdain for property rights, such as pilfering and industrial sabotage, but also such scattered but innovative collective actions as squatting, rent-strikes, sit-ins and work-ins; though they recognise that such actions may not be consciously understood in such terms ("whatever their explicit ideology, they <u>implicitly</u> involve some claim by the workers to have rights in the operation or disposal of assets of the firm"[147]). They also note the available evidence of increasing disenchantment with the established parties and the political process, referring to both opinion poll findings and the trend in 'partisan dealignment' between 1951 and 1974[148].

Beyond such pointers, though, there was little detailed evidence comparable with the Barking study, for, while several of the workplace studies discussed earlier indicated elements of 'latent proletarianism' or radical assessments of inequality and access to power, they tended to lack the specificity of the Barking material. In these circumstances Moorhouse has to content himself with citation of the findings of an opinion poll which asked the question 'Do you think there is a class struggle in this

country or not?'. He suggests that the clear majority answer of 'yes' throughout the early 1970 s, and the overwhelming answer in these terms among Labour voters, implies "a quite highly developed sense of...conflict consciousness" which is "indicative of opposition to values dominant in our society.../and/ the complexity of workers' feelings about class and class relations"[149]. Moorhouse presents this argument as a prelude to discussion of his own detailed material, rather than as a clear basis for generalisation, and he is quite tentative in his interpretation. Nevertheless, he does argue that this pattern of answers reveals a vocabulary of class contest foreign to dominant ideological themes, and thus indicative of strands of counter-ideology. However, the difficulty of basing generalisations on such materials is underlined by the fact that Moorhouse has been challenged on precisely this point by Howard Davis in the study I consider next.

Davis grounds his argument in the evidence of his own research into the everyday imagery of several groupings of workers, among whom he found little indication of a concern with class struggle, but for the moment I want to comment on the disagreement about the poll answers[150]. Since he found little resonance with the notion of class struggle in everyday discourse he suggests that such responses are more likely to have echoed dominant values and media discourse than to have contradicted them in the way Moorhouse suggests. In particular he highlights that strand of dominant values which <u>uses</u> the term class struggle:

> "to connote 'outdated', 'politically irresponsible', 'insincere' and 'ideological'. Used in this way it serves dominant values by presenting the alternative to the consensus view of politics and society in a negative light"[151].

This is certainly both a definite usage and an ingenious interpretation, which points up the complexity of both media discourse and popular consciousness, and emphasises the inadequacy of such opinion poll data for adjudicating the issues at stake when more detailed studies in different settings produce conflicting findings. Indeed I take this latter point to be the central and well made claim of the Davis critique, though I suspect from Moorhouse's exploration of <u>his</u> local study and the tentativeness of his comments on this poll evidence that he would not dissent.

Beyond this, though, the emphasis which Davis gives to the straightforward assimilation of the class struggle motif into dominant ideology in these terms, and its reproduction in superficial discourse, itself appears

simplistic. Firstly the complexity of this assimilation and reproduction may be greater than he allows. Such poll findings as that of February 1974, when "the Conservatives, not Labour, were seen as the divisive class party" by the majority of those interviewed, suggest, at the very least, that the clichés of 'irresponsibility' and 'ideology' may be part of a contested repertoire, perhaps in part given a distinctive gloss by Labourism[152]. Furthermore, the force of his critique is weakened by a failure to accord the findings of the local study reported by Moorhouse and Chamberlain any attention or significance alongside his own, or thus to consider the probably uneven success of the media in casting the rhetoric of class struggle in the terms he suggests[153]. There is, as Moorhouse notes, an unresolved paradox in positions which simply dismiss general statements which hint at radicalism as 'externally derived' and 'fundamentally out of character', while suggesting that parochial discontent is contained by its coexistence with an endorsement of generally stated dominant values[154]. What these differences of interpretation point to, once more, is the need for a more careful and systematic exploration of both the vertical and the horizontal 'stratification' of consciousness and ideology of the sort implied in Westergaard's criticism of Lockwood's original typology[155]. From these arguments over the poll findings, then, the question of the generality of radical values and counter-ideological themes remains unresolved, but the complexity of the relationships between experience, organised ideological projections and patterns of consciousness is once more underlined.

In summary, what Moorhouse and Chamberlain succeed in doing is to demonstrate the range and saliency of critical and radical themes in the thinking of many of the tenants they studied during a period of conflict over rents. This undermines much of the significance attributed to 'gestalt' patterns of money imagery in a more thoroughgoing way than most of the studies I reviewed earlier in this chapter. In addition their evidence about the relationship between critical views of property and power and the espousal of 'direct action' suggests that counter-ideological themes can have a vitality which may challenge the compartmentalisation and routinisation of parochial dissent. At the same time their failure to explore the dynamics of organisation and action, alongside the fluidity and movement of consciousness, still leaves them open to the criticism that they have documented an ephemeral blossoming of radical and critical elements of consciousness, however much that blossoming involves increasing scepticism about established labour movement institutions. I will return to this issue in my comments on the marxian ethnographies of workplace class relations, which focus on rather more enduring forms of 'grass roots' organisation and action than has generally been the case in the arena of community and housing politics.

As I have already noted, Davis found little echo of radical themes among the workers he studied, and I now need to give some attention to his own research before coming to an overall assessment of the implications of these two contrasting studies for arguments about class consciousness and action. I will begin by commenting on the main features of Davis's approach, and then turn to a selective discussion of his characterisation of the social consciousness of particular groupings of workers, before returning to the more general argument about radical themes and their significance.

In many respects Davis's work remains recognisably within the tradition of research stimulated by Lockwood's seminal article, but it is distinctive in drawing theoretical and methodological inspiration from the 'continental tradition' in the sociology of imagery and action, rather than from the Bott-Lockwood paradigm. In particular Davis takes up two of the central themes in critiques of Lockwood, namely the lack of a close fit between imagery and milieu and the contradictory character of social consciousness, but develops them in a rather distinctive way influenced especially by the ideas of Alain Touraine[156]. Thus at a programmatic level he stresses that social consciousness is an active process of interpretation ("it can no longer be seen as a representation with a precise content but as a creative act, as an exercise of the imagination"), a key feature of which is that it transcends immediate 'experience' through conceptions of alternative social arrangements ("to create an image of the world and social relationships which confronts reality at a distance, not merely reflecting it but generalising, simplifying it and generating alternatives")[157]. In accord with this programme Davis pursues Touraine's concern to articulate the conceptions of identity, opposition and totality characteristic of different social groupings or movements; and his attempt to locate these features in relation to the general evolution of work from an 'occupationally-based' to a 'technically-based' locus of human creativity and control. To address these twin concerns Davis adopted an exploratory approach in his interviews, aimed to elicit evidence of the distinctive horizons of everyday consciousness as well as the dominant themes ('topics') characterising specific social groupings; and he interviewed men in three quite different areas of work, maintenance fitters in chemicals, melters at the top of the job ladder in steel smelting, and clerical supervisors in a life assurance company (while distinctive these groups were all relatively advantaged vis a vis the mass of manual workers).

On the basis of his research Davis draws a sharp contrast between the patterns of occupational consciousness of the steel melters and the insurance

superintendants, with the maintenance fitters occupying a somewhat unclearly defined intermediate position, but with none of these groupings revealing any significant signs of radical strands of class consciousness. In looking at these findings I will concentrate first on the contrast between the melters and the clerks. This contrast involves two distinctive forms of non-radicalism, each grounded in, though not simply reducible to, distinctive patterns of work organisation. Thus the settled occupational solidarity of the melters, involving a strong sense of identity but little sense of totality (radical or otherwise), is grounded in the occupationally-based organisation of work; whilst the supervisors' sense of participation in the exercise of managerial competence, together with a wider (but quite conventional) vision of organisational and societal totality, is grounded in a technically-based organisation of work. Having looked at these two groupings I will then consider the more complex case of the craftsmen in chemicals.

Davis delineates the following features of the occupational identity of the steel workers: they celebrate steady advance up the job hierarchy, coupled with growing experience and 'feel' for the work process; they embrace progressive technical change, even despite the threat of closure associated with the latest wave of rationalisation; they include both the union and plant management within their imagery of harmonious production, not least because they experience the union as an extension of themselves while management "don't interfere"; and finally this identity defines the narrow horizons of a settled and uncritical Labourism, which co-exists with a nebulous scepticism about 'politics' and a distinctly rudimentary class imagery. Davis argues that this tightly bounded occupational consciousness has a characteristic self-sufficiency which limits the play of dominant ideological themes without sponsoring any wider challenge to those themes, and he locates this distinctive consciousness in the stability of work and community relations in steel. Thus he recognises the manner in which such perspectives have been conditioned by a long period of prosperity in the industry, during which technical changes delivered improved wages and conditions through institutionalised trade union bargaining; and he also acknowledges that the effects of such features were compounded for the first melters by their progress up the job ladder to elite wages and imminent retirement[158].

In contrast to the steel workers the distinctive consciousness of the clerical supervisors focusses on the following features: their opportunities for secure career advancement within insurance, tempered by a resigned acceptance of certain limits to that advancement; their role as managers of

a smoothly running system, oiled by their understanding of the needs of both customers and subordinates; a sense of company loyalty which overrides personal disappointments and sectional dissatisfactions; and finally, going beyond the company, a wider vision of the openness of mobility opportunities and cultural advancement into and within the middle class. Thus Davis argues that these superintendants construct a 'collusive consciousness' (collusive because it suppresses concerns arising from disappointed career plans and the like) which embraces a sense of totality consonant with, rather than critical of, conventional wisdoms. On this basis he suggests that this distinctive organisational consciousness arises from the interplay of the mutually reinforcing features of biographical experience of career advancement, managerial cultivation of an ethos of company loyalty, and dominant ideological, especially media, themes[159].

In these terms, then, Davis offers a stark contrast between the inward-looking occupational identity of the steel men, characterised by an unwillingness to rehearse wider social perspectives, and the conception of totality articulated by the insurance clerks, owing little to a distinctive occupational identity but drawing together career perspectives and dominant ideological themes of management efficiency. Though in each case he registers significant tensions and variations within the patterns of consciousness involved, each excludes any radical motif though by rather different routes. However his characterisation of the consciousness of the maintenance craftsmen is rather more complex, not least because it was amongst them that he found a more obvious play of contradictory themes and attitudes.

At the core of the outlook of these fitters are several characteristic features of a craft consciousness: an emphasis on the life-long accumulation of practical experience; celebration of commonsense and conscientiousness; a recognition of subtle differences of skills and interests within the commonality of the craft; a quite widespread view that to become a foreman would put you in 'no-mans-land'; and a sense of autonomy and control within the immediate work process[160]. However, the implications of such craftism for relations with management and with the union are by no means straightforward. In regard to management the craft concern with autonomy at work meshes with a process of craft administration to support a widespread conception of teamwork and co-operation within the work process; but this is qualified from two directions. On the one hand the majority of craft workers identify wages as a continuing locus of conflict, though their precise interpretations of the character of of this 'cash nexus' vary sufficiently to prompt Davis to remark that "even

craft work can have a variety of meanings, which may be either complementary or contradictory"[161]. On the other hand, while the bulk of these men construe relations in the work process as harmonious, a minority point up some of the sources of strain within such teamwork, ranging from authoritarian management, to conflicts between departments, to a couple of mentions of trade union interference. Such a pattern of attitudes suggests that the craft consciousness of these workers was lodged fairly comfortably within the employment practices of the oil company, though the relationship between craftsmen and management was not an entirely settled one, either within the work process or, especially, on the wages front.

Davis also identifies significant ambivalences among these men regarding trade unionism. Most of them are 'union minded' in a basic sense, but for many the union is an external structure: they are not active participants in its institutions, they look to (but are often disappointed by) its bargaining performance at company level, and they harbour some hostilities towards the formal union bureaucracies. Davis argues that it is on these themes, on the topic of trade unionism, that these workers have the most contradictory attitudes and draw upon a particularly diverse array of sources for those attitudes. Alongside their own low-key experience of workplace collectivity, which can itself be understood in divergent ways, they appeal to some of the established conflict rhetoric of the labour movement ('to fight for better pay') but also utilise the standard vocabularies of media stereotyping ('too many unions...too much power'). Davis argues that the appeal to the rhetoric of conflict represents a largely archaic usage which is generally negated by widespread qualifications ('must be fair to both sides'), but that the media stereotypes and personal experience co-exist as bases of inconsistent and contradictory views ('too much power' co-exists with 'push for better wages'), so that:

> "the labels and phrases seem to float free from the circumstances of everyday life. The more detached and stereotyped they become, the more contradictory a person's opinions and perspectives are likely to be."[162]

What remains unclear in Davis's account at this point is the manner in which these different strands of opinion may interact, or their relative saliency in different circumstances, an issue to which I will return shortly.

Finally Davis explores the wider social imagery of the fitters, which he finds characterised by the co-existence of inconsistent but barely elaborated alternatives: a registration of the persistence of the stubborn realities of class distinctions; an emphasis upon the scope for 'getting on' through a

combination of personal efforts and good fortune; and a scepticism about the scope for meaningful social change (signalled particularly by a resort to the rhetorical question to mark the boundaries of the 'realistic' and the 'practical'). Here again, then, Davis notes the play of divergent vocabularies, which, though he insists they are deployed in "an active process of negotiation between competing definitions", generate only a fairly shallow and inconsistent social imagery[163]. Thus he suggests that, compared with either steel workers or supervisors, this grouping of workers experienced a more substantial tension between their own occupational outlooks and dominant ideological themes, and this tension is registered in a particularly fractured and contradictory consciousness. However, within this pattern there is again little evidence of the sorts of radical motif portrayed by Moorhouse and Chamberlain; at most there may be hints of some potential volatility of views[164].

What, then, is the significance of these findings for the wider arguments about class consciousness? It is possible to quibble about certain aspects of the characterisation of these distinctive forms of occupational or organisational consciousness even within the terms established by Davis. For example, the search for recurrent 'topics' in each milieu, and the framing of these 'topics' in terms of such categories as 'totality', may have distracted attention from some of the contradictory and competing currents of opinion in these settings, despite the intent to escape from a static typological approach. Again, it is not entirely clear why the notion of 'collusive consciousness' should be reserved for the supervisors rather than being applied more widely, for example to the non-recognition of market vulnerability among the melters. Nevertheless Davis's approach, which in practice appears to owe as much to the symbolic interactionist tradition as to the decidedly ambiguous 'principles of analysis' enunciated by Touraine, provides a sensitive and sophisticated account of some features of the social consciousness of these workers, and thereby a valuable reminder of the variety of forms which a non-radicalised class awareness may take[165]. The more important issues which arise from this documentation parallel those which I raised earlier in relation to the work of Moorhouse and Chamberlain, and concern the typicality of such forms and their implications for the activity of workers.

I have already considered the unresolved dispute between Moorhouse and Davis concerning the relationship between general survey results and their readings of the wider implications of their own case-studies, and I have suggested that the issue of typicality or generalisation cannot be adequately settled on that basis. Another way of addressing the issue, implicit in the

structure of Davis's argument, is to locate the three occupational groupings he studied within some broader account of changes in patterns of employment. Davis considers two reference points of this sort, though as he himself recognises neither of them is entirely satisfactory for his purpose. Firstly he locates his case-studies in terms of Touraine's trajectory from 'occupationally based' towards 'technically based' forms of work organisation. On the basis of his studies he offers a more 'pessimistic' diagnosis of the implications of this trajectory than does Touraine, for instead of seeing 'technically based' work organisation as a setting for a new sense of transformative totality to be articulated by 'new social movements', he sees it as facilitating the fragmentation of occupational identity and the impact of dominant, media propagated, ideologies[166]. There are two related problems with this attempt to locate the detailed occupational studies: firstly, the characterisation of the categories involved in this trajectory remains very abstract; and secondly, perhaps as a consequence, it remains questionable how far these studies (and particularly the contrast between steel and insurance) can stand as adequate bases for more general claims about the patterns of experience and consciousness within these very broad categories.

In seeming recognition of these problems Davis turns to his second potential bench-mark, Braverman's analysis of the degradation of work[167]. Thus he registers elements of the standardisation and simplification of tasks in each of the settings he studied: standardisation and modularisation of refinery maintenance tasks; simplification of judgemental tasks through advanced instrumentation on the smelters; and office mechanisation in insurance. However, though he endorses Braverman's general account he also has to recognise the limitations of these changes among the groupings he studied, thus leaving the issue of generalisation unresolved. In a real sense this ambiguity about the impact of work degradation follows from one of the central features built into his own research design, namely that all three occupations remain relatively advantaged in comparison with the mass of workers, one aspect of which has been that deskilling developments have so far had only minimal impact on their work autonomy and wage levels[168]. Unfortunately, however, Davis never really faces up to the implications of this consistent, though variously based, relative advantage for his wider prognosis or his dismissal of the findings of Chamberlain and Moorhouse. Only in the final pages of his book does he acknowledge, somewhat grudgingly, that:

> "the fact that none of the groups in our study showed a significant awareness of fundamentally opposed groups or classes does not close the issue altogether. Rather it is an indication that claims on the social

> system are being met or at least the possibility of their being met is perceived to exist"[169].

Of course, this problem in locating the case-studies in a wider account does not negate Davis's specific findings or prove that they are of no wider relevance, but it does suggest the critical importance of exploring more carefully the processes which have sustained the distinctive positions of advantage of each of these groups, and the ways in which they have remained secure or become more vulnerable. In other words, how are they to be located in the patterns of heterogeneity and flux in the labour market and the labour process discussed earlier?[170]

In this context it is particularly notable that the location of the steel melters at the top of their job ladders meant that they had gained their position through the operation of entrenched seniority provisions underpinned by the prosperity of the industry during the post-war boom, while the dismantling of these gains in many of the older steel areas was to be borne directly by the next generation of workers rather than themselves[171]. Thus, as Davis notes:

> "for the next generation of workers this continuity has already been broken - hence the rumours of 'bother' at a nearby steelworks. This is a timely reminder (since we have been considering an unusually static context of work and community) that the system of historical action is in constant flux and this places strict limits on the generalisations we can make from a single group of workers studied over a limited period of time"[172].

Indeed such sharp generational discontinuities, combined with the evidence elsewhere in Davis's study that workers on the verge of retirement may hold a particularly positive view of the 'progress' of their working life, make the broader relevance of the melters' experience and outlook particularly unclear, though of course the establishment and demise of such elite positions may be a recurrent aspect of the heterogeneity of work experience[173].

The advantages enjoyed by the maintenance fitters are more clearly characteristic of a long established and quite widespread form of stratification of the manual work force, on the basis of craft organisation and skills which have meant that such advantages have been fairly uniformly shared <u>within</u> their craft. For these men organisation on such a basis within a horizontal labour market has meant the possibility of a more favourable trade-off in wages and working conditions than was available to the bulk of manual workers. Furthermore, those studied by Davis had gained a particularly favourable niche within

this market as a result of employment in a secure and expanding firm and / sector. This was the relatively benign background to their largely 'passive' trade unionism, though evidently their craft conditions remained vulnerable at the margins (in addition to simplification of some tasks, management had sought to formalise differentiation within the trade through a grading scheme, and were also increasingly employing outside contractors) and such threats had evoked collective responses (the grading scheme had been effectively resisted, while later these men went on strike "over a closed shop issue")[174]. Clearly a fuller exploration of this interplay of management strategies and the reflexes of craft organisation would be necessary to locate the experience and consciousness of these fitters in relation to other craft groups, let alone other less advantaged categories of workers.

These comments also bear directly on the second question which I raised earlier, namely that of the relationship between the patterns of consciousness delineated by Davis and the past and potential activity of these workers. Unfortunately it is characteristic of his approach that his evocation of the contours of craft consciousness among the fitters remains very much at the level of structures of thought, instead of being closely related to the actual dynamics of management-worker relations. Indeed, as Edwards and Scullion have recently pointed out, Davis provides only the most fragmentary treatment of the day-to-day activities of management and workers in the refinery, and he certainly provides no real discussion of the episodes of union activity (such as the union official's exclusion from, then return to, plant negotiations) which he does mention[175]. This makes it difficult to tease out the implications of the interplay of the contradictory strands of opinion on trade unionism for the modest moments of mobilisation which these workers had engaged in. In turn this makes arguments about the potentials for wider and more critical mobilisations or the likelihood that such episodes would be recouped within a predominantly 'passive' unionism entirely speculative[176]. Thus it remains unclear how far the apparently greater vulnerability of the craftsmen to the appeal of dominant ideological themes, when compared with the melters, rests on mere absence of developed 'counter-ideological' perspectives as the result of a 'passive' unionism, or how far it is fueled by more active dissatisfactions with the performance and character of official union structures. As with Hill's treatment of the 'compartmentalised consciousness' of the London dockers, the dynamics and implications of the 'contradictory consciousness' of the fitters remains largely unexplored. Thus not only must the distinctive forms of consciousness explored by Davis be seen as grounded in particularly favourable employment circumstances, but the implications of these contradictory

repertoires of 'common sense', for continuing accomodation or for more challenging patterns of conduct in changing circumstances, must remain uncertain.

In summary, then, these studies can be related to my earlier discussion in the following ways. In regard to the arguments about the heterogeneity and changing experience of waged work, the situations of both melters and fitters, like that of the London dockers, represent distinctive patterns of relatively enduring advantage which cannot readily be assimilated to the Blackburn and Mann model of unpredictable wind-falls and constant flux. Instead they underline the need to analyse the specific forms and limits of such limited gains within the manual labour market, and the differing roles of collective organisation, management policies and state activities in sustaining and transforming such situations. (Insofar as council housing has represented a form of housing security and improved conditions compared with private tenancy, the Moorhouse and Chamberlain study serves as a reminder of the struggles which can develop around such limited gains in the sphere of social provision as well as within employment).

In regard to the arguments about the contradictory, but in part radical, character of working class consciousness, Davis's study, like that of Hill, underlines the scope for dominant ideological themes to operate when institutionalised collective bargaining and prosperity frame a situation of relative advantage. However my critical comments suggest that the resulting patterns of social consciousness cannot simply be treated as encapsulated or compartmentalised, but must be explored more fully and critically, firstly in terms of the bases of the attractions of orthodox ideological themes in the structuring of employment experience, and secondly in relation to the interplay of competing perspectives in the processes of collective mobilisation and demobilisation. Certainly this second issue became central to the diagnosis developed by Moorhouse and Chamberlain and is not convincingly disposed of in Davis's exploration of variant forms of non-radical social consciousness. Thus it remains crucial in the controversies between those who celebrate elements of radical popular counter-ideology and those who emphasise the fragmented and accomodative character of working class consciousness. Since the interplay of patterns of worker consciousness and mobilisation in the context of the capitalist organisation of production is a focal concern of marxian ethnographies of class relations on the shop-floor, it is appropriate that I consider some examples of such studies in the following, final sections of this chapter.

The Rationale of the Marxian Ethnographies of Work

Having considered several sociological studies of occupational experience and social imagery, I now want to turn to the marxian ethnographies of work produced during the 1970s by Beynon, Nichols and their colleagues, to consider how they address the key issues of the character of class relations within capitalist firms, the specific ways in which different groupings of workers experienced wage labour in this period, and the dynamics of organisation, struggle and consciousness among such workers[177].

In earlier chapters I discussed the unpublished Beynon and Nichols critique of the Luton study at several points, but I made little mention of their detailed empirical studies of specific workplaces, though these studies clearly both influenced and elaborated upon their relatively schematic critical commentary. However, these studies deserve more specific attention, not only to complement their critique, but also because, in following up these arguments, they provide the most substantial marxian accounts of the experience and outlooks of particular groupings of manual workers in Britain towards the end of the post-war boom. Each of the groups of workers studied by Beynon et al were employed by a large 'modern' multinational firm, and each could be regarded as in some sense 'affluent' - in 1971 the Ford car workers, nationally, had average hourly earnings just a little below those earned at Vauxhall, while the ChemCo employees were among those chemical workers described by Nichols and Beynon as "paid some of the highest wages for manual workers in Britain"[178]. At the same time the two firms involved, Ford and ICI, represented somewhat different sectors and corporate strategies, while the two workplaces also differed markedly in levels of shop-floor union organisation and patterns of class consciousness. Thus, while these studies address similar questions, they offer different bearings upon the common issues of class relations and consciousness. For all these reasons I believe it is particularly appropriate to round out my discussion of some key strands in the post Affluent Worker debate (and the first volume of this thesis) by providing a brief and selective commentary on these marxian case-studies.

In looking at these studies it is also worth noting that they have served as important reference points and inspirations for several continuing traditions in the radical study of work: in particular for investigations growing out of joint work with shop-stewards' committees (where the continuities with the Fords study are most evident), and for some of the marxist-feminist studies of the work experience and often informal tactics of survival among

women workers (where comparisons with Chemco are more obvious)[179]. Thus in considering the strengths and weaknesses of these studies a useful basis may also be provided for assessing some aspects of these broader traditions of investigation.

In the following commentary I intend to address three interrelated themes. One concern is to trace out how some of the marxian criticisms of the Affluent Worker study were elaborated in distinctive ways in these detailed ethnographies. In particular I will explore their arguments about the relations between capital and labour in the production process, and about the complexities and contradictions of workers' consciousness and action in this context. A second concern will be to register and comment upon the measured, even somewhat 'pessimistic' analyses of the development of working class organisation and politics which emerge from these case-studies. This is a feature not only of the discussion of the seemingly quiescent ChemCo workforce, but also in some respects of the analysis of the active workplace militancy at the Ford Halewood plant, and it certainly qualifies some of the optimistic features of the arguments of Robin Blackburn and even Westergaard, though partly by following through another Westergaardian theme, that of the debilitating role of the institutionalised practice and ideology of Labourism. Finally I will address some of the analytical problems and question marks raised by these exemplary and influential marxian ethnographies. In particular I will comment on (i) the issue of shifts and variations of corporate strategy and their relationship to variations and heterogeneity in the experience of wage workers, and (ii) the question of the material bases of the appeals of Labourism to workers and some implications for characterising the relationship between interests and consciousness. Though these issues are raised in a distinctive way in these detailed case-studies of particular groupings of workers, they do, of course, point to wider areas of uncertainty and debate within marxian analysis and politics. In the remainder of this section I will address these themes in a preliminary way by commenting on the common methodological thrust of the case-studies, before pursuing them further in relation to substantive arguments in the following sections.

It will be recalled that the Beynon and Nichols critique of the Luton study focussed on the way in which it abstracted patterns of attitudes from the lived social relations of employment. This meant that Goldthorpe and his colleagues provided little exploration of the dynamics of management initiatives, either at the level of top corporate policies or at the level of tactics in the workplace. Similarly they paid little attention to the day-to-day organisation and reorganisation of work and associated shop-floor

responses, and in particular to the problems and possibilities of collective action. The virtual absence of these features combined with a rapid resort to ideal-type contrasts to produce what Beynon and Nichols termed a 'one-dimensional' treatment of consciousness; one which lacks a sense of the texture, contradictions and flux of social relations at work and of the meanings which people make of their working lives[180]. In accordance with these strictures Nichols and Beynon focus their own work directly upon the interplay between the two poles of class relations within the workplace: on the relations between the organisational power and management strategies of corporate capital on the one hand and the possibilities and limitations of workers' shop-floor organisation and struggle on the other. Their discussion of shop-floor experience and consciousness is, then, embedded within their analyses of these class relations. Clearly this does not necessarily mean that the various ethnographies approach these topics in identical ways. The distinctive features of class relations, consciousness and organisation which characterise the two settings influence the shape of the arguments in the specific studies in ways which I will return to below. Beyond this there are, no doubt, shifts of focus and analytical emphasis between different authors and monographs. Nevertheless, the fundamental concerns of the three research reports are those which I have just outlined, and flowing from these concerns there are several features of their shared approach which deserve attention before looking more closely at the claims of the specific studies.

All three monographs stand in sharp contrast to much of the more abstract marxist theorising about class and ideology which was prominent in 'marxian sociology' through the 1970s, for these authors systematically take as their point of departure the experience and understandings of the workers they studied[181]. Though they clearly acknowledge the limitations of case-studies of particular workplaces in developing general arguments, they advance a clear, though admittedly rather abbreviated, rationale for their approach. However, this rationale seems to have been lost on most of their critics, who have either dismissed the studies as casual celebrations of the myths and prejudices of particular workers, or otherwise, and more temperately, charged them with a 'sociological amnesia' in rediscovering well-established features of informal workplace conflict[182]. Even where their work has been more straightforwardly assimilated into the literature, and cited especially to exemplify distinctive styles of sophisticated modern management or different forms of workplace steward organisation, little attention has been given to this underlying rationale and its ramifications[183]. It is, therefore, worthwhile giving closer attention to the reasons the authors give for their emphasis on experience and feelings.

As Beynon indicates, this emphasis was inspired by the work of such marxist historians as E.P. Thompson, who had sought to rescue the experience and struggle of ordinary people from the 'enormous condescension of posterity', and to understand the active part of such people in making history in contention with the powerful[184]. This Thompsonian programme became central to the conception of contemporary social analysis championed by both Beynon and Nichols. Firstly they saw the task of rescuing the realities of work experience from both academic stereotypes and media myths as of continuing importance, especially as such myths could be potent in denying a proper representation of their own experience to ordinary workers. Secondly they argued, very much in parallel with Thompson, that any adequate representation has to grasp the dynamics of lived relations of control and contention, rather than rest upon some static depiction of situations and attitudes.

Thus each of the case-studies takes as its primary task the representation of workers' experience: "what work is like" and "how they make sense of their lives"[185]. In the study of Ford this experience is contrasted particularly with the stereotypes of 'mindless militancy' which figure so strongly in media representations, for the text engages as much with popular stereotypes as with explicit social theory, not least because it is argued that the former are more central than the latter in the active distortion of any shared understandings of contemporary work experience. Nevertheless the book also unobtrusively contests a variety of more systematic social analyses, including some of the simplicities of 'left' theorising about the politicisation of industrial conflicts. In the ChemCo study, where the workers had done less to invite media stereotyping beyond the ubiquitous label of 'lazy', the focus is more on the spectrum of apologetics for 'modern industrialism', from Blauner through to Herzberg, though again there are also criticisms of some left romanticism, in particular that which interprets sabotage straightforwardly as active class struggle. In all of the studies the recovery and representation of experience and feelings is central — especially those 'trouble-making' feelings that "things as they are are just not right" despite the claims to the contrary by both management and the media[186].

This concern with experience and feelings, as they are embedded in active relations of control and contention, underpins a research process which emphasised, in Beynon's phrase, "a hesitant mutuality"[187]. What was involved in such a research process was admittedly little discussed, especially prior to the new edition of Working For Ford, and the critical remarks on conventional surveys glossed over any explicit parallels with the work of other ethnographers

(such as Roy or Cunnison), but their approach developed the logic of many of the criticisms of the studies of attitudes and social imagery which I have noted earlier in this chapter[188]. Thus formal interviews were only one source of understanding, accompanied in each study by several years of "more or less continuous 'non-participant observation' (save that this sounds a somewhat pretentious description for 'being around', 'dropping in', arguing, chatting, listening to conversations, asking questions and cross checking)"[189]. People were talked to 'on and off' over considerable periods, and the process of dialogue included some circulation of draft accounts for comments (though how extensive this was, and how it worked, remains unclear)[190].

The mode of presentation of the material is also guided by the focus on experience and feelings; seeking, as Beynon says, to match the rhythm and the texture of workers' activities and ways of understanding[191]. Furthermore, the emphasis is placed upon analysing relationships through the accumulation of incidents and recollections, which together expose the shifts and tensions characteristic of those relationships. In this context attitudes and arguments are understood as particular and partial ways of making sense of a complex and dynamic set of social relations, and the contradictions of attitudes and of aspects of experience are treated as mutually illuminating. Thus, in the study of Fords, the feeling amongst the stewards that "the members can be bastards" is set alongside their underlying belief that "the lads are paramount" to illuminate the tensions in the relationship between stewards and members in the course of specific episodes of mobilisation and division; and at ChemCo the managers' celebration of the working of the 'system', while they also distance themselves from some of its effects, is made to throw light on the contradictory features of work as an 'agent of capital'[192]. Similarly each study gives attention to some of the specific biographical patterns through which individuals experienced the dominant social relations of the workplace, and the distinctive inflections which these different biographies imparted to their understanding of those relations. Thus, some of the most illuminating analyses of characteristic patterns of social relations in each workplace trace shifts of personal activity and sentiment, as in the contrast between the biographies of Les and Eddie as workplace militants at Fords, or the discussion of the creeping disillusionment of Billy King with promotion chances at ChemCo[193]. In both these ways, through the exploration of different facets of experience and consciousness of the social relations of the workplace, and through attention to specific biographical movements within the wider repertoire of feelings and judgements about these relations, Beynon and Nichols move sharply away from the surveys and typologies of attitudes characteristic of

most of the literature I have reviewed earlier in this chapter. It is also worth noting that their approach embraces both Davis's emphasis on the active construction of understandings of class relations (though rooting this much more clearly in the living out of those relations), and Moorhouse's argument that 'activists' and 'masses' may be rather differently engaged in such constructions and in seeking to act upon them.

Having recognised the centrality of this Thompsonian programme, it must also be recognised that, as many of Thompson's critics have emphasised, the mandate of 'experience' remains a problematical one[194]. Certainly culturalist approaches escape from crude attributions of false consciousness, into a more subtle appreciation of the play of different working class traditions in the interpretation of the contemporary world of work; a feature Beynon and Nichols each illustrate, the first in tracing out the reworking of Liverpudlian traditions by the Ford stewards and the second in tracing the refurbishing of established Labourist identities around a north-south contrast by the migrant foremen of ChemCo[195]. However, within a marxian framework such appreciation also involves some critical assessment of the adequacy of such reworked cultural resources in grasping the essential, underlying features of the social relations of wage labour[196]. Thus, although Nichols, Beynon and Armstrong emphasise the recovery and wider communication of the lived experience and consciousness of these workers, they are not simply engaged in juxtaposing different patterns of experience and understandings. They are also involved in assessing those different strands in terms of their characteristic patterns of insight and mystification, or penetration and limitation[197]. This is particularly evident in Beynon's analysis of the perspectives of the Ford stewards as a form of sophisticated factory consciousness, but it is also a feature of the discussions of the varied outlooks of the ChemCo workers. Often, however, their celebration of lived experience tends to obscure the analytical claims and arguments which such assessments involve, and as a result some of the theoretical themes which are in play in these studies remain largely implicit. This not only leaves readers with rather rudimentary indications of the underlying theorising at some critical points in the case-studies, but it may also invite an over-simplified closure of the analysis, either by the authors themselves or by their readers. This danger appears to be compounded by the case-study format, because this combines on the one hand an explicit modesty concerning the analytical claims which can be made, and on the other an implication that each study stands as an exemplar of capital-labour relations with little indication concerning the specificity of that exemplar[198]. How far the drawing of simplistic conclusions is a significant

danger, alongside the detailed evocation of work experience and consciousness, can only be judged by a more specific consideration of the substantive arguments about class relations at Ford and ChemCo, and it is this which is the focus of the final sections of the chapter.

Management Militancy and Shop-floor Mobilisation at Ford

I now intend to follow up some of the themes and issues outlined in the previous section by providing a selective summary of the substantive arguments in these marxian ethnographies, looking first and in more detail at Beynon's study of Ford and then at the ChemCo case-studies. My outline and commentary will then provide a basis for a brief overall assessment of their contributions to the debate about the experience of wage labour and patterns of worker consciousness in post-war Britain, which I have been reviewing in this chapter.

In Working For Ford Beynon's representation of the lived experience of waged work focusses first of all on the exigencies of pace and pressure on the track, and the ways in which the experience of these alienating features of wage work is compounded by both dictatorial management and the insecurity of employment. His fundamental point of reference is the underlying reality of simplified, paced and anonymous wage labour; a reality evoked by the outline of repetitive assembly-line routines at the beginning and end of the book, and crystallised in comments by track workers themselves:

> "I'm a labourer, just a labourer. When all's said and done all I can do is labour. That's all I can sell isn't it";
>
> "It's the most boring job in the world. It's the same thing over and over again. There's no change in it, it wears you down"[199].

This characterisation of the realities resulting from the commodity status of waged work is located in terms of the two overarching themes of Beynon's analysis of class relations at Ford: the awesome power of capitalist management to simplify, intensify and control wage labour, and yet the manner in which that power continues to be contested in varied ways on the shop floor.

His analysis of the power of Ford management takes the historical development of Fordism, an innovative form of simplified and intensified track work buttressed by harsh discipline and relentless enforcement of managerial prerogatives, as its point of departure, and he then traces post-war developments in Ford's management strategy[200]. This has been marked by clear continuities with the earlier period, since the company sought first to avoid

any unionisation of its plants and then to minimise any effective forms of workplace challenge to managerial command. Thus the defence of managerial prerogatives has remained paramount, although there has also been some oscillation between 'hard' and 'softer' management tactics as ways of securing disciplined and intensified labour. Beynon also emphasises that behind these strategies stands the increasingly internationalised production and planning of the Ford Company, which mean enhanced mobility of capital and thus the greater vulnerability of workers to coercive cost and productivity comparisons across a range of production sites and local labour markets:

> "the multinational producer is far more able than the purely domestic producer to manipulate particular local circumstances - such as a vulnerable workforce - to its own advantage. By establishing workrates in one place, like Cologne, the company can make this rate reverberate throughout its operations".[201]

At the same time, though, Beynon documents how such developments as the more rigorous application of the 'Cologne yardstick' (and now the 'After Japan' comparisons) have not meant the stifling of workplace organisation; and he also recognises that they have not sustained any simple uniformity of management tactics. I will now explore the interplay between management tactics and workplace organisation in more detail.

[illegible]

The long entrenched strategy of intensive production and managerial prerogatives, institutionalised in a day-rate payment system and heavy supervision, was carried into the Halewood complex not only as corporate policy but as the personal experience and established practice of the management and supervisors who moved to the new plant. Thus "when Ford came to Liverpool 'restrictive practices', the activities of shop-stewards and managerial prerogatives dominated the minds of management and supervision".[202] This meant not only harsh discipline and work pressure within the plant but also attempts to capitalise directly upon local unemployment, both by recruitment policies aimed to minimise militancy and by the sponsorship of a pliable unionism. In Working For Ford Beynon focusses his attention on the dynamics of management control and shop-floor challenge in the production process, but he does not ignore the wider labour market context within which those on the line experience their situation as wage workers. Thus he notes that Ford had moved to Halewood in part because of the abundance of labour, which meant they had "had the pick of the labour market"; though things were not so tight in the early '70s that people could not move on, so in the end their sophisticated selection policies had a limited impact and "all they were left with was a watchful eye for the militant and the intelligent".[203] Rather than a workforce composed wholly of

vulnerable and inexperienced family men, they also finished up with a scattering of experienced trade unionists and significant numbers of 'stroppy' single lads. Nevertheless, those who stayed at Ford were intermittently reminded of the underlying insecurity of their position by the spasmodic layoffs so characteristic of the motor industry, while changes in both the local labour market and the international production strategy of the company increasingly underlined their vulnerability in the course of the 1970s (and into the 1980s). It was against this background that Ford management persistently sought to enforce tight managerial control over the production process and work effort in the Halewood plant, while shop-floor workers participated in continuing efforts to limit the impact of management power. These processes of control and counter-control, which represent a crucial source of the 'brittleness' of the cash-nexus emphasised by Westergaard, provide the central focus of Beynon's analysis.

Drawing largely on the recollections of experienced union activists, Beynon seeks to trace how, right from the opening of the plant in the early 1960s, management control meant both authoritarian supervision of work allocation and the edging up of line speeds, as the company sought to boost productivity and profitability. Indeed the reassertion of managerial control is a recurrant theme of the case-study. This pattern was exemplified in 1963, before the move to Halewood, in management strategy during the strike at Dagenham, when they dismissed union activists and dismantled established sectional arrangements about manning and work pace. At Halewood in the 1960s "facilities were fought for, gained, only to be lost again", as the activities of the stewards became the focus of conflicts over job control[204]. In the early '70s, following divisions surrounding the ending of national strike action:

> "the stewards' committee was shattered by the clampdown that greeted the return to work. The severe imposition of the 'ball and chain' returned the steward organisation to the early days of the 1960s - struggles were again localised, again they involved the issues of job controls and the rights of shop stewards. Some stewards simply folded under the pressure"[205].

The second edition of Working For Ford brings this sequence up to date by noting that in the early 1980s there was another dose of "plain tough discipline" which management attempted to enforce through a new disciplinary code backed by punitive layoffs (while a further dimension was added to the problems facing workplace unionism by the fact that jobs in the more militant, labour-intensive sections were the most vulnerable targets of automation in this period).

This pattern of management offensives set the conditions within which an active workplace trade unionism was painfully established and maintained at

Ford, first by developing sectional opposition to work pressure, and, beyond this, by building upon sectional gains, to consolidate factory-wide steward organisation and a measure of shop-floor counter-control throughout the factory. It was on this basis that, by 1968:

> "the Shop Stewards' Committee was in a position to establish a level of consistency in the job control exercised by each of its stewards on their section. Its ability to secure this consistency derived from the actual controls over job regulation that had been built up unevenly throughout the plant"[206].

This was not by any means a uniform process, as some sections still found themselves bereft of leverage and under pressure, while others, taking advantage of specific production exigencies and often led by more experienced and active stewards, developed more ambitious counter-controls. Nevertheless, in the better organised sections stewards played a significant role in work allocation, so that, <u>within</u> the parameters of the track speed, such "sections functioned almost autonomously with all the coordinating tasks being performed by the shop stewards"; while the stewards had also gained some rights in regard to line-speed itself[207].

However, Beynon's characterisation of the gains made through sectional and factory-wide workplace struggle underlines the ambiguous and conditional character of even the most significant gains. On the one hand they represented real improvements at the level of immediate supervisory control:

> "victories in these struggles were far from hollow ones for in their defeat of the supervisor the workers and their stewards laid down the essential basis for a say in the way their lives were to be regulated while they were in the plant"[208].

On the other hand, though, such gains were generally sharply circumscribed so that "most of the 'victories' that a steward achieved were at the expense of the supervisor and - unless the supervisor happened to be a 'bastard' - were hollow ones as a result"[209]. The limitations of such gains had two related aspects, which Beynon explores in terms of specific incidents, either observed or recounted by the stewards themselves. Firstly such 'little victories' tended to leave untouched the wider power and strategy of corporate management, a feature emphasised by the manner in which management continually exercised pressure upon supervisors to reassert control. This meant that there was almost 'perpetual confrontation' with supervisors, while specific 'victories' were not readily translated into more widespread and consistent gains. Secondly, while Beynon recognises that "a shop steward with a well organised section in a car plant has, during periods of boom, more to bluff with than his foreman", he also argues that the mixture of bluff and leverage which allowed specific

sections to make some important advances also leaves those sections vulnerable to renewed attack.[210] Thus he comments of one of the most successful sections:

> "in a period of expanding output it would not be worth it for management to challenge the areas of job control in the small parts section because this carried the risk of a stoppage. In the long term, however, the bluff would be called and Eddie knew this: he also knew that when that happened they would have to settle for a reduction in manning".[211]

In other words the concessions won, though they might be more substantial than Beynon's second use of "hollow" in the earlier quotations might indicate, were both fragile and conditional. They represented a tacit compromise at the parochial level which left the overarching power of management intact, to be enforced at the opportune time, when management found it necessary or workers appeared vulnerable.

The process of organised sectional initiative and struggle against authoritarian supervision and work pressures is, then, one of the major themes of Beynon's account, showing as it does both the power of management to command the disposition of labour power in the production process and the unsettled and contested character of that power. The persistent possibility of renewed management pressure was combined with the uncertain circumstances surrounding even modest concessions, to underline the vulnerability of sectional and even factory wide advances in job control. In consequence one of the key lessons drawn by the Ford stewards was that "you can never ease up".[212] Ford's strategic entrenchment of managerial prerogatives in their centralised bargaining, their payment system and their style of supervision continually brought this home on the shop floor. As a regional union official remarked:

> "they're killing themselves up there in that plant ... the steward's got nothing to bargain with", and a steward added "we're running flat out all all the time and just to stay in the same place"[213].

Thus Beynon's documentation of the history of industrial relations at Ford underlines as recurrant themes renewed assertions of managerial command, fresh offensives against effective workplace organisation and new drives for increased effort. In a moment I will consider how such features made the experience of the initial Ford hard line at Halewood, and the stewards' analysis of that experience, of continuing relevance for the Halewood workers in later years. At the same time, however, Beynon also recognises, as a counterpoint to the 'hard line', management strategies and concessions which represent more of a 'soft line'. Even for the pre-war period Beynon registers significant shifts of policy, first from the paternalistic control exercised by the Sociological

Department to the physical intimidation of the goon squad in the context of intensified competition and mass unemployment, and then later reluctant moves towards union recognition during the war (reluctant, he suggests, because Ford "hadn't learnt to adapt to the subtler forms of control of the New Deal"[214]). In the post-war period the various tough assertions of managerial power in the Liverpool factories were punctuated with periods of what Beynon terms "the soft sell", as, in the face of determined shop-floor unionism and buoyant market conditions, management "tried to live with", and at least in certain phases, to establish "a 'constructive relationship'", with the stewards[215].

It is worth noting in this context that, though he has been criticised for providing an inadequate account of the experiences and perspectives of managers at Halewood, Beynon does provide some illuminating suggestions about how such changes were mediated through the internal politics of management, in terms of shifts in power between different management teams and specialisms. For example he suggests, on the basis of both specific incidents and management comments, that:

> "the production managers are the hard heads, for them money is success, the difference between failure and success lying in the extra car or two that they can sqeeze out of the lads ... often they come into conflict with 'personnel'. The history of the Halewood estate in fact is one in which power ebbs and flows between these two managerial power groups. The 'firm line' does not always work"[216].

The shift towards a 'personnel' or 'IR' dominated strategy was particularly marked from the mid to late 1970s, when the Ford doctrine of untrammelled managerial prerogatives was tempered by an attempt to draw senior stewards increasingly into formalised negotiation, and especially into dialogue over 'productivity problems' facing the company. Beynon says of this period that:

> "it was something that went against the grain but ... ideologies can be bent to circumstances ... essentially ... it involves a detailed attempt by the company to accomodate to the presence of trade unions; it involves an attempt to capture them"[217].

In discussing such developments Beynon registers real shifts of management policy but suggests that the 'soft line' was of only limited significance for shop-floor workers. This was for two related reasons. Firstly it was because, once more, such moves remained vulnerable and left the overarching power of management unaltered:

> "the stewards may be able to prise away some of management's controlling rights but they can hang onto these for only so long as the needs of business dictate. Essentially the controls obtained over the job by shop-

floor union activities involved little more than a different form of accomodation to the more general controls imposed by management"[218]. Secondly, and going beyond this, the 'soft sell' often involved procedures which tended to routinise workplace unionism, and threatened to de-mobilise collective responses to discontent. This was a lesson which the stewards themselves took from their involvement in the establishment of the job evaluation scheme in the early 1970s, when they found themselves drawn into management policy initiatives which limited their responsiveness to their own members and they temporarily found themselves overtaken by unofficial-unofficial action. It is also a theme in Beynon's interpretation of the experience from the mid-1970s, when the long-demanded reform of the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee drew senior stewards away from their involvement on the shop-floor into the national negotiating machinery, while section stewards were expected to administer the arrangements which had been negotiated centrally, rather than play a more active role[219]. Thus the workers and stewards at Ford Halewood faced not only the recurrent reality of active management offensives against the small areas of counter-control which they had been able to establish, but also attempts to codify relations between management and workplace trade unionism in ways which both routinised representation and implied the policing of militancy rather than active membership mobilisation.

This analysis of management strategies and shop-floor organisation shows how workers, and particularly their stewards, faced threats both from frontal attacks on parochial job control and from attempts at incorporation and domestication of trade unionism. On the one hand, though shop-floor organisation had been developed through active struggles against the 'hard line' stewards could not afford to challenge management at every turn. Often an outright confrontation could leave workers vulnerable, a point emphasised early in the life of the Halewood plant by the dismissal of an ex-Dunlop activist, Johnny Jones[220]. Thus the stewards had to develop a strategic sense; they needed "strength but also guile. The stewards didn't think it advisable to oppose management continuously"[221]. The other side of this was that the resources and tactics of management very often meant that stewards were "forced to play the game management's way ... In the face of a powerful, prestigious adversary, the soft sell is often the best form of attack and self-defence" for the <u>stewards</u>, too. As a result most stewards, most of the time:

"play negotiations management's way. They learn the limits of the game and in the routine of their lives in the plant tend not to step outside them"[222]. However, while "'you can't fight a battle every day' ... sometimes they've got to"[223]. Thus management strategy, and particularly the 'soft line', invites

routinisation and a settled professionalism, but this has its own vulnerabilities, especially in undermining the vitality of shop-floor organisation. Thus the Halewood stewards warned that "we've got to be careful we don't become too professional", and regarded the experience of the Dagenham stewards, the 'armchair generals', as a warning in this respect[224]. The difficult line that needed to be drawn was sharply underlined in the experience of one of the Convenors observed by Beynon. During the lead up to the walk-outs over grading grievances he remarked:

> "'If I took everything up that they asked me to I'd be in and out the office like a fucking yo-yo'. [to which Beynon adds] In a way he was right of course but by 1968 he wasn't in a position to tell the good from the bad - the issue to fight on and the issue to play down"[225].

In addressing these problems facing workplace trade unionism Beynon develops the most distinctive feature of his analysis: a subtle and detailed account of shop-floor organisation and consciousness at the Halewood plant, concerned with the dynamics and dilemmas of the social relations and understandings involved, rather than with the more static portrayal of attitudes and institutions characteristic of many of the studies examined earlier in this chapter. A central theme in his account is that, while the experience of working for Ford nurtured an active workplace collectivism among Halewood workers, this was necessarily an uneven process. In particular it was the stewards who were not only the crucial catalysts of effective workplace struggle but also developed the most consistent and penetrating analyses of class relations and trade unionism in the workplace. In this regard Beynon's core argument is that the Halewood stewards had gone through a process of collective learning in their struggles against Ford management, and it was this which had generated their sophisticated factory consciousness. In particular "those early days ... when the plant was unionised, provided the stewards with an important understanding of the power relationships in our society, of the nature of management and union bureaucracies"[226].

I want to pinpoint four key features of this argument about the process through which stewards developed their distinctive and sophisticated insights into class relations in the workplace, before considering the interplay between stewards and members in the plant. Firstly, indeed, Beynon emphasises that the perspectives of the stewards were developed in a process which actively involved the mass of workers through the struggles they engaged in, for:

> "the shop-floor leadership was itself produced through the struggles of workers on the shopfloor ... [and] those struggles and the unity that carried groups of workers through them, were crystalised in the shop

stewards' committee"[227].

Thus the stewards learned from and built on the day to day experience of collective mobilisation which was the necessary basis of an effective response to management. Secondly, though, the stewards occupied a distinctive position and learned distinctive lessons both from the early struggles (in which they were often key participants) and from their continuing encounters with managers, for:

> "unlike the rank and file member the steward is allowed some access into the 'backstage' of the company's operations", and this "fosters deeper insights into the functioning of the firm than those achieved by many of the members"[228].

In this regard Beynon argues quite explicitly that the stewards did not simply express the sentiments of the ordinary worker, but articulated a more developed understanding of the logic of Ford management; "a more radical critique of the Ford Motor Company than existed generally within the factory"[229]. Thirdly, while the "furnace of shop floor confrontation" provided the central experiences from which the stewards at Halewood collectively developed lessons about the nature of multinational companies and the logic of shop-floor unionism, they also drew both positive and negative lessons from beyond their own factory, particularly from Liverpudlian workplace organisation and working class traditions and from the successes and failures of trade unionism in other Ford plants, especially Dagenham[230]. In this respect, again, they developed a distinctive, privileged vantage point in comparison with the mass of Ford workers. Finally, the steward organisation itself was a crucial social resource for the development and testing of commitments and perspectives; sponsoring likely activists as new stewards; serving as a point of reference and support for individual stewards; providing the milieu, both formal and informal, within which strategic options could be thought through; and institutionalising not only a practical experience but also a moral ethos guiding effective shop-floor action[231].

Thus Beynon argues that the distinctive forms of class consciousness developed among the stewards were forged in an interplay between the raw experience of capital-labour relations on the shop-floor and a wider repertoire of understandings and traditions carried, but also actively developed, by networks of trade union activists within and beyond the factory[232]. In combination these features begin to trace some of the complex interaction between activists and masses, and between labour traditions and day to day experience, mentioned in Moorhouse's discussion of radical strands of class consciousness, and thus explore some of the active relationships between the varied horizontally and vertically stratified aspects of working class

consciousness which were only hinted at in the exchanges between Lockwood and Westergaard.

To pursue this point I now want to explore a little more both the differences of outlook between stewards and rank and file workers and the active relationship between activists and members within which such differences must be understood. Beynon suggests that the stewards' outlook was both more coherent and more radical than that of most of the members. Thus he notes, on the basis of his formal interviews, "a consistently critical attitude towards management among the stewards", which involved "a clear and sophisticated understanding of the role of management within the factory. In comparison with this, the responses of their membership were markedly uncertain and confused"[233]. Both of these features are important: the more systematic outlook of the stewards codified key elements of the inchoate and shifting views of the membership, but beyond this their analysis developed those elements in a more radical and strategic direction. Thus the interview data suggests that most shop-floor workers tended to be more satisfied with their employer than were the stewards: "a general and probably correct impression is that most members felt that in several respects the Ford Motor Company was a reasonable company to work for"[234]. There was a closer similarity of views about the role of the union, though there was a greater depth of commitment to unionism among stewards while members were more likely to think in terms of the 'services' unions provide. However, the theme of coherence remains critical because Beynon wants to suggest that, whatever their reported attitudes, the rank and file reveal considerable volatility in their attitudes and actions. This volatility arises out of the character of the cash-nexus and authoritarian management:

> "the assembly line workers' relationship with the car plant is a tenuous one. It has been described as a 'brittle bond'. The militancy of the car worker is based on this 'brittle bond'. This militancy creates problems for the activist, but it also finds expression through union activity"[235].

In this context attitude surveys have only limited relevance, because it is the active relationships between stewards and workers that become central to processes of collective mobilisation and class conflict in the workplace. Hence it is these relationships which become Beynon's focus.

> Such relationships are of necessity characterised by unevenness:
> "the tension between the need for trade union organisation and mass participation in that organisation is a vital and irresolvable one. A gap exists between the shop stewards and the rest. A gap created by the

very fact of sustained activism and enforced by its organisation"[236]. Furthermore, this unevenness is heightened in a car plant by the very circumstances of mass production, for:

> "fluctuating line speeds, absenteeism and labour turnover all work against the development of a stable relationship between the steward and his members"[237].

Thus, while the social relations of the assembly line and the pressure of management generated a basic collectivism and opposition to management among the Halewood workers, it was only in the active interplay between steward leadership and membership sentiments that effective collective organisation and action was developed and sustained. This involved the stewards in both listening to 'the lads' and arguing with them, it meant both sharing the experience of track work with them and giving them a lead, and such relationships were by no means simple and straightforward. In their concern with strategic bargaining priorities the stewards could dramatically misjudge the mood of the membership (as was the case over the grading package); the relationships and understandings built up in the plant could be undermined by other developments such as national bargaining tactics (a defeat on a strike ballot in such circumstances in 1971 led the stewards to give their members a 'roasting' as they sought to re-establish their position); and there was always a creative but uncertain relationship between sectional activism and factory-wide organisation (Beynon notes that this issue was a source of some controversy on the Stewards' Committee, but he doesn't explore the implications in terms of sources of disunity very far in his own analysis[238]).

It is appropriate to note at this point that Beynon not only argues for the penetrating character of the stewards' perspectives, but also explicitly adopts the methodological device of regarding their consciousness and organisation as a 'prism' through which the broader dynamic of class relations at Ford can be focussed and understood[239]. This, then is the basis for the close analytical symmetry between Beynon's own account and the perspectives of the stewards; the symmetry which has led some critics to see him simply as portraying a stewards' mythology. However, such a charge not only ignores the nuanced discussion of the shifts and dilemmas in the experience and perspectives of the stewards, both in their relations with 'the lads' and with management; more crucially, it glosses over the underlying argument about the status of their perspective as a developed form of understanding of the class relations in which they are engaged, as a factory consciousness which clearly comprehends the essential features of wage labour at Ford.

This underlying argument is certainly not based on the imposition of

some abstract yardstick of revolutionary politics. Though Beynon draws upon some of the earlier students of workplace unionism, such as Cliff and Barker, Topham and Turner et al, who emphasised the potentials of steward organisation in pursuing issues of counter-control and challenges to managerial prerogatives, he underlines the problematical character of such developments.[240] Thus he argues that collective organisation and action on the shop-floor is beset by similar dilemmas to those faced by the wider trade union movement, since:

> "its structural relationship with the company is basically the relationship of trade unionism to capitalism. It opposes, but its opposition isn't total, for in its opposition it accepts the existence of capital".[241]

Unions, both in the workplace and in national bargaining, are 'defensive organisations' fighting against the 'effects of the system'[242]. Indeed the accession of more radical leaders at national level during the 1970s only served to underline the limited horizons within which institutionalised trade unionism usually had to work, while workplace organisation was thrown further onto the defensive by the development of Ford's global strategy and the additional manoeuvrability which it afforded to capitalist management. In this regard one of the important features of Beynon's discussion, notwithstanding the symmetry I have noted between his analysis and that of the stewards, is that it not only celebrates but also develops a critical appraisal of some features of the stewards' own views - in particular a critique of of the diagnosis which was popular among the shop-floor activists, which focussed on a generalised 'sell out' by union leaders[243].

This sort of criticism not only reflects Beynon's appreciation of some of the genuine dilemmas posed in the process of bargaining with capital. It also arises from a scepticism about the easy resolution of such dilemmas through political substitutionism. Indeed he, like the stewards, is sharply critical of established left orthodoxies which have sought to subordinate factory struggles to the political agendas of revolutionary groupings, because of the way in which the practical priorities of effective workplace organisation could be actively threatened by such subordination. Such reservations do not arise from any belief in the political self-sufficiency of trade unions. Thus, while Beynon challenges any vulgar Leninist conception of the division between union and political consciousness ("we need to be wary of drawing a crude distinction between a political and a non-political understanding" ... "the disjuncture between what has been termed a 'trade union consciousness' and a 'political consciousness' is not a clear one"), he also recognises that the politics of shop-floor organisation, the grasp of the politics of management power, tends to be "not easily transferable to other arenas of class exploitation and power"; that the stewards' class consciousness is a distinctively

factory-focussed consciousness[244].

The key to Beynon's positive appraisal of the specific politics of the steward organisation is not, then, any claim that they had resolved these dilemmas of wider organisation and politics. Rather it concerned the understanding which they had gained within the factory; the analysis of workplace class relations which they had developed and sustained in the course of their struggles with Ford, despite the enduring dilemmas which they faced. In particular Beynon argues that their factory consciousness involved more than just a clear grasp of the corporate hard line in industrial relations; it involved an underlying appreciation of the alienating character of ordinary wage labour, and in consequence understood and sought to build upon, rather than deny, the low key but persistent repudiation of the conditions of such labour by ordinary workers. This emerges quite clearly in his claim that:

> "in its least developed form it [the urge to control] is revealed in sporadic 'bloody mindedness' and 'malingering' ... the underlying structure of this view is not radically different from that which underpinned the consciousness of the stewards at Halewood. Their class consciousness can be seen as a higher development inasmuch as they had worked out a sophisticated understanding of how they were exploited in the factory and how they could best combat management there. Not infrequently this involved them in bloody mindedness"[245].

At the same time Beynon recognises, as did the stewards, that the relationship between elemental rebelliousness and 'refusal' and effective organisation is not straightforward. Thus on the one hand he emphasises that "when notions of 'humanisation' and 'control' are stripped of their abstract quality workers on the line in the car plants know <u>exactly</u> where to start", as they seek to create space through slowdowns, job sharing, messing around, or sabotage[246]. On the other hand, however, the stewards could not just underwrite such spontaneous rebellion, since it could be ineffective, divisive, self-defeating or dangerous to other workers. Thus, as I have already indicated, a central tenet of steward consciousness concerned the need for a strategic perspective, for leadership aimed at building both unified and effective collective action. This meant being aware of the risks of isolated but flamboyant challenges to supervision; seeking to combat the dangers of sectionalism; a cool appraisal of the timing of strike action for maximum effect and minimum vulnerability; and warning people off such dangerous tactics as 'bostic bombs'[247]. As Beynon notes "individual acts of defiance or laziness can threaten unity and organisation achieved by the mass in collective action"[248]. While such actions may involve:

> "a fundamental challenge to the whole thing because these lads did't want

> to produce motors. This denial is so fundamental that it has nothing whatsoever to do with trade unionism .... trade unionism is about work and sometimes the lads just didn't want to work. All talk of procedure and negotiation tends to break down there"[249].

The perspectives of the Ford stewards were, then, grounded in both the antagonism of 'the lads' to the pressures of the line and a basic collectivism rooted in their common fate within such a tightly defined work process. These features were the bedrock of their trade unionism, exemplified in an ethic of continual contact, shared experience and responsiveness to the shop-floor: "without the lads we're nothing"[250]. Thus the stewards' analysis of class relations in the factory was marked by a clear grasp of these underlying realities and sought to appreciate, as well as to transcend the limitations of, the fundamental 'refusals' which marked the primary responses of workers to their alienation. But they were also, and indeed in consequence, engaged in the dilemmas of collective organisation and trade unionism:

> "the radical trade unionist finds himself in an insoluble dilemma. He fights by the rules of the system that he hardly approves of, within an organisation that has proved itself manifestly incapable of changing those rules"[251].

Thus the potentials inherent in the politics of factory class consciousness, as developed by the Ford stewards and as a critical strand of the wider workplace collectivism of the Halewood workers, cannot simply be written off in terms of trade union consciousness or instrumental collectivism or pragmatic accomodation, for none of these characterisations adequately grasps the moral critique of management power which is central to that factory consciousness[252]. At the same time, however, Beynon's celebration of the struggles and consciousness of the Ford workers, while it vindicates the modest arguments of Westergaard and Moorhouse concerning significant strands of radicalism in popular consciousness, is markedly at odds with any strong 'explosions of consciousness' thesis, both in its emphasis upon the struggle involved in building the stewards' committee and in its recognition of continuing dilemmas and limitations[253]. In particular Beynon stresses that the responses of workplace activists and organisations to these problems depend critically upon their articulation with wider collectivities and political agendas. In this respect Beynon pinpoints two very substantial obstacles to any translation of the radical potentials of workplace unionism into a wider movement. Firstly there is the character of the established Labourist politics which dominates the British labour movement, and secondly there is the severe inadequacy of revolutionary politics. On the first count Beynon briefly reiterates the arguments we have met before, concerning the manner in which Labour politics

reinforces the limitations of trade unionism, by translating the dilemmas and compromises of unionism into a professionalised disregard for the fundamental alienation of wage labour. However it is on the second count that Beynon's contribution is most original and instructive. For there he does not simply criticise the industrial politics of the Communist Party for its preoccupation with capturing positions, but more fundamentally argues that there has been little real socialist politics which has articulated with the underlying realities of the experience of wage workers. It is this which returns us to the original Thompsonian agenda, for what this means is that a fuller appreciation of the lived experience of wage workers must form the necessary starting point for the development of such a politics, just as it did for steward activity at Ford. In contrast with many left sects Beynon argues that this has been where socialist intellectuals have failed, rather than there having been a failure of leadership or theoretical nerve. Accordingly the solution:

> "lay - if it lay anywhere - in a conscious process of people thinking and acting upon that whole range of 'refusals' which made up the working class in struggle. There, perhaps, in learning from each others' struggles - past and present - in documenting and assessing them, lay the ground for an authentic strategy for labour"[254].

In the meantime:

> "it is precisely this space (call it autonomy or independence; call it control or humanity) which the march of capitalist expansion seeks to regulate and ultimately deny. And it is this space which has - in the welter of numbers - been forced underground politically", so that workers' struggles have "represented a politics which tended to operate within certain limits. In a way they had an enduring, almost endless quality; a refusal to accept, hedged by a reluctance to entertain the possibility of things getting better"[255].

So far I have considered some of the ways in which Working For Ford provides an exemplary analysis of the dynamics of day to day conflict between capital and labour on the shop-floor, in contrast with the market focussed analysis in most of the research I have reviewed earlier. In particular I have stressed that Beynon's account involves an investigation of the development and oscillation of management strategies of labour control; a vivid exploration of informal, sectional and factory-wide tactics of survival and resistance against management; and a very detailed analysis of the possibilities and limitations of workplace union organisation and mobilisation. Nevertheless there are inevitably some important limitations to the study, and these relate on the one hand to its status as a case-study and on the other

hand to the tacit manner in which the appeal to the experience of wage labour is theorised. In particular I wish to pinpoint three problem areas arising from these features, each of which bear upon the assessment of the general significance of the analysis for wider arguments about working class experience and consciousness. These are, firstly, ambiguity about the range of ways in which ordinary workers at Fords made sense of their own work experience; secondly, the issue of the distinctiveness or typicality of the militant strategy of Ford management, in relation to other firms and sectors; and thirdly, the question of how far soft line management involved real concessions which reinforced a conciliatory unionism. Since the later marxian ethnographies of work at ChemCo also take up related issues, my comments here will also provide a background to my brief consideration of those case studies.

The first of the problem areas concerns the apparently varied ways in which rank and file workers experienced and responded to their wage labour at Ford, and thus some of the difficulties of a direct appeal to that experience. On the one hand Beynon discusses in some detail the manner in which the consciousness and organisation built by the union activists through their struggles with Ford actively challenged and, with varying success, reinterpreted some features of workers' own conceptions of their experience; but on the other hand he does not fully recognise the implications of this in underlining the problematical character of the underlying experience of wage labour even at Fords. In part this limitation arises from the otherwise highly successful methodological device of using the stewards' organisation and consciousness as the 'prism' through which to focus the shop-floor experience, for as Beynon himself acknowledges, focussing also involves some distortion[256]. This means that the analytical gains of that focussing have a specific cost, in making more difficult an account of the character and sources of those understandings and sentiments among Ford workers which clash with those addressed and articulated by factory class consciousness.

The stewards certainly recognised that some of their members "can be 'self-interested', 'narrowminded', and 'ridiculous'. They can have 'very silly views'" which needed to be combatted[257]. Similarly, the arguments conducted by and within the stewards' committee suggest that an incipient sectionalism was widespread on the shop-floor; while the marginal success of management tactics of favouritism towards 'blue-eyes' provides some evidence of cross-currents of individualism among the Halewood workers, sufficient at least to offer some leverage to foremen using such tactics[258].

However Beynon's concentration on the activists, and his limited examination of the spectrum of viewpoints on the line, tends to leave the messy variety of workers' 'common sense' renditions of experience and struggle somewhat in shadow. Furthermore he then tends to locate the sources of such ideas outside the workplace, without any real consideration of the potential interplay between wider ideologies and specific features of the social organisation of production which might cut against the formation of collectivism and effective factory organisation[259]. One consequence of this is that it becomes difficult to assess the depth of radical factory consciousness among ordinary workers at Halewood in comparison with elsewhere. While a central theme of Beynon's analysis concerns the manner in which mobilisation and action arise out of a dialectic between the practice of resistance and the interventions of experienced and thoughtful union militants, rather than simply flowing from some consolidated pattern of consciousness, this comparative neglect of the more mundane and backward facets of workplace consciousness remains an important weakness, given the Thompsonian inspiration of the book, and its fundamental appeal to experience.

Another significant limitation of Beynon's analysis concerns his failure to explore very far the specificity of the strategic militancy of Ford management, in relation to more general arguments about the character of capital-labour relations. Of course case-studies always confront problems of location and generalisation; but in many ways Beynon presents his study of the experience of work at Ford as an exemplar of the common conditions of contemporary wage labour, arising from the predominance of the Fordist model, without any real discussion of the scope and limitations of such a claim. Having said this, it should also be recognised that he very clearly registers some of the specificities of capital-labour relations and workplace unionism at the Halewood plant in particular contrasts and comparisons which he makes in the course of his analysis.

Thus, at the most general level, he draws out an important contrast between skilled and unskilled workers and forms of trade unionism:

> "skill controls the job and is solidified in the union ... in his negotiations with his employers he [the skilled worker] is able to call upon as great a variety of subtle arguments as his members have control of the job", whereas "the steward on the assembly line deals only in the physical presence of his members on the line. They may be able to affect quality slightly, here and there, but basically they either do the job or they don't"[260].

Such comparisons can, of course, buttress an emphasis on the common condition of the modern mass worker in contrast with residues of craftism, as is characteristic of the Italian theorists of 'autonomia' who have been one influence on Beynon's conceptualisation[261]. However Working For Ford includes other comparisons which suggest a recognition that, outside the restricted ambit of craft organisation, there are other significant variations in bargaining leverage and the terrain of management-worker relations. In particular Beynon registers the sharply contrasting outlook of some stewards in the steel industry when compared with those in motors, and he does so in a way which suggests that such differences are not simply attributable to the deficiencies of union traditions in steel, but arise in part from the distinctive tempo of restructuring and management-worker relations in that industry (a tempo which I have already alluded to in my earlier discussion of Davis's study)[262]. Thus he notes that in that industry:

> "stewards were long serving men, and most of then held responsible jobs as leaders of teams of workmen. In this union stronghold the stewards also articulated an ethos of service, but on top of this they tended to draw attention to the education which they derived from being a shop steward ... The integrative aspects of trade union activity are evident here. These men clearly identified themselves with their work and their jobs, and their unionism reflected this. If anything the opposite applied in the Halewood assembly plant. No steward mentioned the educative aspects of trade unionism in this sense. Their trade unionism was blunter. They got satisfaction and some sense of purpose from being active trade unionists"[263].

Now it is certainly possible to argue that there were specific conditions within the steel industry which gave a particular inflection to shop-floor experience and industrial relations over quite a long period of time, but in turn this suggests that more also needs to be said to locate the distinctive features of the Ford management strategy at Halewood and of Fordism more generally.

In this regard Beynon also recognises that even within the motor industry there have been significant differences in the dynamics of class relations on the line, which have had substantive implications for the conditions and experience of work. In doing this he takes up a familiar theme of the literature on industrial relations in the car industry, to suggest that the piecework systems in most of the Midlands car plants facilitated the development of parochial shop-floor initiative:

> "in the piece-work plants of Austin, Morris and Rootes, in the Midlands the workers were in a stronger position. Taking advantage of labour

> shortage they were able to bargain, through their steward, on a day-to-day basis with management. And the basis of the bargain was the rate. Any proposed change in production schedules - in the speed of the line, the type of model on the line and so on - led to negotiations over the rate for the job"[264].

Furthermore, these differences in payment systems and bargaining arrangements were only part of the distinctive patterns of investment and manning in the different motor firms, with the Midlands factories characterised by lower capital investment and hence more reliance on labour-intensive systems of production. Beyond this Beynon also notes that even within the Ford empire, indeed even within the Halewood complex, different groupings of workers could face rather different pressures on shop-floor organisation:

> "a stoppage in the transmission plant could stop the whole of Ford UK. The wind didn't blow so cold on the lads in that plant and their steward organisation reflected these easier conditions"[265].

Such variations raise important questions about the character and dynamics of the subtle differences in class relations in the immediate production process both within and between sectors, which I believe require more explicit recognition as issues for marxian theorising about the experience of wage labour, and explanations of the sources of unity and division among wage workers[266]. In this regard one of the interesting features of the discussion in the second edition of the book is that Beynon not only shows how worldwide sourcing, mass unemployment and world over-capacity can shift management strategy in a more hard-line direction, both within Ford and through the spread of Ford industrial relations 'expertise' and strategies throughout the car industry (with state-sponsored rationalisation of BL then setting the pace). He also explores some of the conditions under which a more soft-line approach was adopted by Ford UK. Thus he suggests that on the one hand corporate management were forced to accomodate to a more entrenched labour movement and the absence of a fully-migrant labour system, and on the other hand they had sought to capitalise upon the comparatively low wages of skilled and experienced workforces in Britain. As a result they had given a distinctive twist to Ford's UK investment and operations, both by seeking more bureaucratised bargaining relations with workplace unions and by shifting towards smaller plants concentrating on components operations with less unskilled workers[267]. Beynon addresses the first aspect of this distinctiveness quite directly, but he does not really address the consequences of the second aspect of this specificity (perhaps because Halewood, as an assembly plant, remained an exemplar of Ford's mainstream operations). Nevertheless such specific

features of corporate accumulation strategies, whether they be within firms, between companies in a specific sectors, or between sectors, need more attention if such exemplary case-studies of particular workplaces as that in Working For Ford are to be properly located; and indeed if workers are going to draw lessons from the sharing of their common and distinctive experiences of wage labour.

Certainly so far as Ford's collective bargaining strategy was concerned, Beynon maps out a significant shift during the 1970s, involving an increasingly sophisticated and co-optive strategy. In the workplace this involved corporate acceptance of the role of stewards, but also an attempt to circumscribe that role as an administrative rather than mobilising one; while beyond the plant:

> "the democratisation of the NJNC increasingly established a pattern where the plant convenors, as full time negotiators, on the company payroll, were in direct and more or less regular contact with both the national headquarters of Ford and the national centres of the labour movement".[268]

Such developments, alongside those concerning the shift towards components manufacture, pose particular questions about the interplay of 'hard' and 'soft' line management strategies, and the substantive implications of such shifts. Indeed these questions emerge most clearly in Beynon's discussion of the developments in workplace steward organisation during this period. There he argues that:

> "the '70s were very different years. Growing numbers of the Halewood workforce were recruited after the 1969 strike. For stewards who had 'been through it all', a lot had changed. The new 'IR approach' conceded many of the things which the old Ford system had held dear; in particular it allowed for union reps to be involved in questions of job allocation and timings. This fitted in with the computer control and the simplified model structure. Within this new production system the line speeds weren't increased illicitly during a shift and models never appeared in the line out of sequence".[269]

What remains somewhat unclear in this analysis, though, is the substantive content of these developments for work on the line. Thus, on the hand he emphasises the limitations of the gains involved by noting that "it was less chaotic and more functionally austere. But the lines ran just as fast"; while, on the other hand, he also remarks that:

> "the comparatively low wages paid to the British workers, and the high prices on the British market meant that in the 1970s the management of Ford UK had an important degree of manoeuvrability. It invested this

manoeuvrability in easing the pressure on 'manning levels' (those by common consent eased in this period) and winning the support of the trade unions"[270].

Quite clearly Beynon is right to stress the limitations of any concessions, when the underlying conditions of labour on the track remained fundamentally the same. Furthermore, not only were there severe limitations to what had been won, but those gains had had to be fought for over a long period, and they still remained vulnerable (as developments in the 1980s underlined). These features support his general argument that:

"where management finds that its right to manage is being challenged within a factory it is involved in a political struggle. Often this struggle takes the form of skirmishes on the shop floor, and at this level shop steward organisation can be extremely effective, and shop stewards can amass a considerable amount of political influence and personal prestige. Where the challenge to managerial authority seriously affects the profitability of the company however the response of management is likely to be firmer. To lay men off or to close plants down permanently, ultimately involves political decisions and it is at this level of struggle that the conflict between capital and labour becomes obviously biased against the worker. Capital is inherently flexible, machines can be written off, investments switched from one part of the world to another"[271].

But what I want to highlight is that for specific but significant periods of time, in particular sectors, and in particular conditions, employers may seek to develop a more conciliatory and settled relationship with workers and workplace trade unionism; and that such developments should not be seen only in terms of the recasting of representative and bargaining structures, unrelated to specific, limited, but in terms of the experience of ordinary workers and their shop-floor organisations significant, improvements in the conditions of wage labour. As a consequence of a combination of the relative strength of organised labour and the specific features of their UK investment strategy, this appears to have been the case even at Ford during the 1970s; while some of the other studies I have reviewed earlier have illustrated the rise (dockers in the '60s; maintenance electricians) and decline (dockers in the '70s; shipyard workers) of particular groupings of workers during different phases of the post-war boom.

In Beynon's account of Ford the 'soft line' tends to be regarded as almost entirely cosmetic, while the 'hard line' reveals the true colours

of capital; and correspondingly a settled and professionalised stance on the part of the stewards' committee and union officials tends to be seen only as symptomatic of bureaucratisation and 'weariness', without recognising how it may also be grounded in real but limited gains and concessions compared with other periods and groupings of workers. In this context Beynon says of the stewards' committee of the mid-1970s:

> "increasingly an antipathy to 'party politics' fuelled by reference to the practices of the Communist Party in the 1950s, became formulated in traditional 'labourist' ways; emphasising not the political nature of workplace relations, but rather the separateness of work and politics, of trade unions and party. These tendencies were encouraged by the developments Ford made in its bargaining arrangements. Increasingly throughout the 1970s Ford has promoted a corporate system of collective bargaining, linking trade union representatives at all levels into the Company's and (hopefully) sanitizing them from more general (class) relationships. In Liverpool the shop stewards' committee (not known for its deep involvement in the wider activities of the local labour movement) came to isolate itself more and more within the confines of the plant"[272]

I would not want to deny the specific effect of the institutions and rituals of bargaining, but at the same time the development of these labourist interpretations also suggests the underlying ambiguities of the experience of the stewards both as wage workers and as bargainers. However, Beynon focusses his analysis on a variant of the 'bureaucratisation of the rank and file' thesis, in which he gives considerable emphasis to the longevity of service among stewards in consolidating this pattern[273]. In my view these arguments fail to give sufficient attention either to the long-term presence and significance of such social democratic trade unionism as one strand within the Ford stewards' committee, or to the ways in which the more moderate and professionalised reflexes of shop-floor unionism may have been reinforced by a feeling of having made some relatively secure gains in this period[274].

A danger within such an analysis is, then, that even in the case of Ford Halewood, and certainly when some other sections of the working class are considered, it risks underplaying any partial gains which may have been made on the shop-floor in the interstices of corporate strategy; with the result that it may underestimate the substantive pressures and incentives towards more conciliatory bargaining relationships and less militant perspectives, both among stewards and rank and file workers. This implies in turn that the argument about the more insightful character of militant

workplace activists needs to be more explicit in both recognising the bases, and then drawing out the weaknesses, of such social democratic workplace consciousness. In this regard Beynon makes it clear that two crucial lessons had been learned by the Ford militants. The first concerned the inevitably conditional and ultimately vulnerable character of specific gains made through workplace and union mobilisation; while the second, strongly related to the first, concerned the manner in which specific gains and constraints upon management within Ford left the fundamentally alienating conditions of wage labour unchanged. My argument has been that such lessons cannot be adequately grounded in appeals to the experience of wage labour as such, but involve an analytical argument about the particular significance of specific forms of that experience, such as that of the stewards confronting the militancy of Ford management.[275] Such an argument is embedded in Beynon's work, but needs more explicit formulation and discussion in relation to shifts of corporate strategy and variations in the detailed character of wage labour, both to recognise the real sources of less militant strands of trade unionism and to go beyond a mere reaffirmation of the contradictory character of trade unionism and workers' struggles within capitalism.

In summary, then, Beynon provides an exemplary analysis of the process of development, and the organisational and ideological dynamics, of a radical shop-floor unionism, which was forged in the course of struggles with a particularly militant management. In doing this he documents the emphasis among activists on a moral critique of management and effective mobilisation of the shop-floor to challenge the company, and the ways in which these features foster a distinctively radical approach to union organisation and activity which both draws upon and feeds into wider currents of class conscious trade unionism and workplace politics. As such his account underlines the one-sidedness of Mann's general characterisation of workers' consciousness and action in terms of pragmatic accomodation and a fractured consciousness arising from a recurrant pattern of aggressive economism and defensive job control[276]. At the same time his account of both the dilemmas confronting workplace representation and the hard-won advances and real retreats in the experience and perspectives of the stewards and activists runs sharply counter to any simple 'explosions of consciousness' thesis. Thus his analysis begins to explain on the one hand the continuing contention of alternative conceptions of trade unionism and of politics within the labour movement, and on the other the specific conditions under which the limited and inchoate strands of consciousness noted by Westergaard and others may be focussed and revitalised in the course of confrontations

between labour and capital in the immediate process of production. My critical comments have focussed on the need to analyse in more detail the specificity of Ford management strategies, and the gains and vulnerabilities of workplace organisation to which they relate; with the implication that (without seeking to reduce the politics of trade unionism to struggles in production alone) this would be necessary in order to explore further the shifting relationships between workplace conflicts and social democratic, radical and revolutionary traditions within the labour movement[277].

Corporate Capital and Shop Floor Resistance at ChemCo

As I have outlined, shop-floor trade unionism at Ford had developed as a militant and sophisticated response to the power of management, clearly demonstrating both the centrality of conflict within the production process and the manner in which a factory class consciousness had developed in relation to such conflict. In these respects it represents a vindication and elaboration of the initial critique of the Affluent Worker study mounted by Beynon and Nichols. The ChemCo studies represent a further exploration of the arguments developed in that critique, but this time in regard to a rather different pattern of relations between capital and labour in the immediate production process. In particular ChemCo management not only operated in a rather different sector, but appeared to have developed their strategy of incorporation of the workforce and trade unionism in a more systematic and sophisticated manner than at Ford; while in this context the workers themselves had developed only quite rudimentary forms of workplace unionism, and this was linked to minimal experience of organised collective action and little evidence of workplace radicalism. As such, class relations at ChemCo represented a potentially more challenging test of marxian arguments about struggle and consciousness than had the militant management and steward organisation at the "seemingly super-militant Ford plant at Halewood"[278]. Thus the ChemCo ethnographies directly address two themes which my discussion of Working For Ford suggested were in need of further analysis: namely the specific character of 'soft line' corporate personnel strategies, and the dynamics of consciousness and action among rank and file workers at some remove from organised workplace union leadership. In so doing they seek on the one hand to provide a critical assessment of the real character of management policy and the resultant forms of work experience in the much celebrated and ostensibly pace-setting chemicals sector, and on the other hand to face up to the realities of consciousness and organisation among a non-militant workforce without simply invoking some potential 'explosion of consciousness' as a marxian escape clause[279].

In their discussions of corporate strategies Nichols et al start by contrasting the mythology of pleasant working conditions and skilled and responsible tasks, with the reality in which the majority of manual jobs on the site they studied involved sheer physical labour (and, they argue, the site they focussed on was not untypical in having only a distinct minority of process operators but many unskilled jobs)[280]. The work was done in dirty and often dangerous conditions, storing and shifting the raw materials and bagging and loading the product. The latter job, especially, was "heavy, repetitive, boring, deeply unskilled work", very much the same as earlier generations of labouring jobs[281]. Meanwhile only less than a quarter of the workers performed the process operating tasks celebrated in much social science; and such work actually involved a wearying combination of tedium, isolation and pressure (coupled, as with most of the other jobs, with the disruptive realities of continuous shiftwork). The operators were usually long-service workers who had moved on from packing, for while "work in the control room is noisy and it can be stressful and lonely ... it is not as arduous as packing bags"[282]. However, while some experience and feel for the plant was often needed, this didn't make the work really skilled:

> "they know their present job, for all its stresses and problems, is the 'best job I could hope for - being unskilled'. They have escaped the tyranny of the bagging line but they live with the fear that it is a temporary release ... the operator who is being paid for being able to operate a particular chemical process is well aware of the transient nature of his skills. These skills 'cannot be taught' - it 'takes years to really get to know one of these plants' - but equally, by their very nature, they are tied to the continuance of a particular chemical process. And in an industry dominated by intense worldwide competition - and therefore unplanned and uncoordinated technological change - the continuance of any plant cannot be anticipated with any confidence"[283].

In counterposing the realities of unskilled labour to the Blaunerian myth, a crucial part of the argument of these authors concerns the manner in which the logic of profitability structures corporate investment in advanced technologies and thus the specific character of the labour process. Thus they argue that one of the critical factors was that human labour was still cheaper than complicated machinery for doing many tasks and "'Mickey Mouse' jobs won't be abolished if men can be bought more cheaply"[284]. Similarly the process operators were subject to exigencies of plant design in which the ease of their labour was not a primary concern, and furthermore

they faced mounting pressures to make older, often temperamental plant perform to productivity standards defined by more recent waves of investment ("the plant goes off line just that bit quicker at eighteen tons ... the margins are that much finer and the tensions and pressures just that much greater"[285]). This argument about the structuring of the labour process by the imperatives of accumulation is important not only as a basis for contesting the optimistic scenarios of technical determinism, but also for the critical leverage it offers concerning the realities of 'consultation' and 'enrichment' as management personnel strategies (and once more underlines the range of issues which were unaddressed in the engagement of the Affluent Worker study with technologism). For Nichols et al go on to argue that the performance of these mundane and routinised tasks, especially in the context of expensive, integrated, but sometimes ageing and temperamental process plant, nevertheless requires a degree of vigilance and active engagement among workers in order to maximise profitability: "even a non-militant workforce that merely 'plods along' and 'gets by' is not enough"[286].

It was concern with this requirement for sustained attention and effort which underpinned management's personnel and industrial relations policies, which were designed to integrate, and orchestrate a level of willing cooperation from, the shopfloor. Before looking more closely at management strategy in this regard, however, the labour market conditions within which it was implemented also deserve note (and these ethnographies, like Working For Ford, do not restrict their attention to the immediate production process, but also comment upon corporate policies and workers' experience in the labour market). While the conventional wisdom celebrated high wages and affluent consumerism among these workers, Nichols et al look behind these features to trace the rather more specific patterns of recruitment which influenced the social composition of the labour force, and to document an underlying experience of entrapment within the bonds of good wages for hard labour. In regard to recruitment the ChemCo plant was established on a green-field site some distance from urban areas, and apart from transferring some key workers, such as the future foremen, from older plants in the North East, the company recruited in the general labouring market locally. However, conditions in the South West during the 1960s meant that "when ChemCo started up it had found itself in a tight labour market", and, much more so than at Ford, management had had to recruit the labour which was available, which included women and 'cowboys and indians'[287]. Many of these workers, and especially the 'cowboys', had previously had a variety of jobs in the casual labouring market of factories and building sites in the area,

and "they came to ChemCo because they needed the money and they'd heard about the summer overtime ... [and] it was a pretty secure place to work"[288]. Another feature of the work experience of many of these recruits was that it had been primarily with small employers; and all but a few had had no experience as active trade unionists, which meant that "the workforce at Riverside could not draw upon any traditions of militancy from its collective past"[289]. Initially, then, despite a green-field site, labour market conditions limited management's room for manoeuvre in recruitment, and the other side of this coin was that many workers felt they would be able to move on quite easily when they wanted to. However, "at the same time as their wages went up, the labour market began to dry up. So they were stuck. Stuck with the shift work too"[290]. By the time of the study, workers were increasingly aware of the difficulty of gaining comparable wages elsewhere, and though for most of them the threat of redundancy at ChemCo was not an immediate prospect, as they were protected somewhat from the impact of the wider recession, this only underlined their entrapment.

Nichols et al draw out several aspects of what this meant, in ways which underline the inadequacy of a purely labour-market focussed analysis of choice and constraint. In particular they indicate the way in which the organisation and reorganisation of the production process interplayed with such shifts in the labour market. Thus the diminished opportunity to escape from the heavy labour of bagging arose not only from the difficulty of matching wages outside, but also because of limitations on promotion into process operation, itself influenced by the development of the 'mobile operator' grade. As a result men faced the prospect of growing old on the bagging line, and "their frustration is compounded by fear of the sack and the fear of what might happen in the future, when they are too old to pack bags"[291]. Even those who had moved off the bagging line (the operators and indeed the foremen) increasingly faced the prospect of the obsolescence of their plant specific expertise and also competition with the more qualified 'mobile operators'. Furthermore Nichols et al point up the pressures on these workers from beyond the production process, pressures which cannot simply be construed in market terms because the social organisation of consumption and family life itself represents a set of active constraints. Thus many of these workers were married with young kids and mortgages, and they were less able to take the risks and costs of a job move than earlier in their lives; while at the same time some of the penalties associated with the relatively high wages at ChemCo, such as shift work and travelling from a distance, also imposed pressures upon domestic arrangements. While

these issues could not be pursued very far within the confines of factory ethnographies, they do suggest how changes in both the labour process and wider social relations of consumption contributed to the sense of entrapment.

I have already noted that the argument which serves as the baseline for the analysis of corporate industrial relations strategy at ChemCo is that neither deskilling nor entrapment guarantee the levels of commitment sought by management. In part this argument is grounded in an appreciation, no doubt underlined by the activities of the workers at Halewood, that:

> "skill is not essential to control. It is possible for unskilled workers, subdivided into routine repetitive jobs, to use their collective strength to oppose capital ... So job design (work degradation) has had to be supported by a strategy which deals not with the job but with the entire labour force"[292].

However, this general argument is accompanied by a clear recognition that at Riverside management were not responding to any real militancy, but rather were attempting to enhance the productivity and profitability of a relatively quiescent workforce. This underlines the point that the objective of management was more than just acquiescence, for they "also want[ed] an actively involved and 'flexible' workforce to prevent waste and to make the system run efficiently"[293]. It was on this basis, Nichols et al suggest, that a strategy of incorporation similar to that so grudgingly developed at Ford was systematically pursued at ChemCo, demonstrating that:

> "the most progressive agents of capital seek to incorporate the trade unions in a web of centralised procedures and to fracture in various personal and impersonal ways the potential unity of what is essentially social labour"[294].

Within this framework of 'enterprise corporatism' such detailed policies as the productivity deal and job enrichment represented specific efforts to augment the commitment, flexibility and productivity of workers on the shop-floor.

So far as union recognition and bargaining were concerned, management strategy was partly conditioned by pressure for recognition at some of the northern plants, but having decided to accept the unions then "management became directly involved in making the union on the site"[295]. In particular they granted recognition and check-off arrangements, which meant that in such plants as Riverside "the men would not experience the shared struggle so often necessary to gain union recognition", and active relations between workers and stewards were unlikely to be forged: a stark contrast with the

formation of the steward organisation at Ford[296]. While management needed more than a paper union because they needed local representatives to negotiate with to implement the productivity deal, they were also in a strong position to set the terms of workplace organisation and the subsequent negotiations. Alongside the usual ideological appeals in the company newspaper and elsewhere, they used a combination of informal and covert tactics to ease workplace trade unionism in a more pliant direction. Thus they were directly involved in the sponsorship of 'suitable' union representatives ("foremen were instructed ... to seek out 'likely material' on the plants and encourage them to stand as stewards"), and they brought a variety of threats and promisses to bear on the existing stewards, offering some little victories to enhance their credibility while seeking to discredit those who were more critical[297]. Such features were exemplified in the rehearsed ritual of first threatening dismissal and then issuing a warning to a worker represented by a steward; and in the granting of permission for stewards' meetings during work time while the deal was being implemented, then the ending of the concession afterwards. Such regulation of shop-floor unionism was critically buttressed by the terms of the national agreement, which centralised bargaining over wage rates at national level and defined a detailed institutional framework which sought to routinise much of the remaining local bargaining. This made stewards into an 'administrative adjunct' of national negotiations and management policy, in a way which was exemplified in the operation of the grievance procedure concerned with grading, where individual workers appeared before a panel of managers after being rehearsed in their claims by their own managers[298]. Thus grievances were individualised and the parameters of the discussion were firmly set by management, while:

> "by more or less eliminating the possibility of action at a local level, the productivity deal makes it difficult for an emergent sense of solidarity to show results"[299].

This, then, was the context within which the specific provisions of the productivity deal were introduced, and Nichols et al suggest that, not surprisingly, management largely defined the terms of these provisions, whilst the ostensible benefits for workers were little in evidence. The authors explore the relationship between rhetoric and reality through the case of job rotation on the bagging line, where they note that several work crews had rotated work informally before the deal, so that management had simply formalised and gained some control over such arrangements. Thus, while job rotation was definitely better than a solid shift on the 'band

end', "at the same time they'll tell you that they've always done it, that no one could survive years of loading", and (to quote the famous phrase) even with rotation "I never feel 'enriched' - I just feel knackered"[300]. This wasn't the end of the matter, of course, for there was then some further informal innovation around the newly formalised arrangements; but as Nichols et al emphasise, any greater control was gained at the expense of faster working, management could step in to veto deviations, and there was the risk that management might exploit such developments by demanning[301]. So the enhanced flexibility and mobility of labour was supposed to involve both more varied work and scope for improved job progression, but the predominant experience was of intensification of effort and limited opportunities for advancement, together with a reduction of overtime earnings. Apart from the initial bonus, which facilitated the implementation of the policy, there was little enthusiasm for the changes (though most people welcomed the more office-bound and less close supervision); and effort ratings and access to senior grades became sources of continuing grievance, though of only very limited effective action[302].

Even such limited signs of dissent as occurred at Riverside provide a hint of some of the difficulties of management's strategy, for:

> "the value of trade unionism to management lies in its (apparent) independence from capital. An independence which comes from the fact that trade unions 'represent the workers'. In as far as this independence is real it can create real problems for management ... On the other hand where the union becomes seen to be simply another tool of management it can lose all claims to represent, speak for, and commit ... the workers on the factory floor"[303].

However, the local management were largely able to steer a way through such dilemmas by capitalising upon both the inexperience and the differentiation of the workforce. The frustrations which workers experienced within the bargaining and grievance procedures remained sectionalised in circumstances where the workforce was split across shifts and tasks, scattered across the site, and differentiated and divided by grades and also by gender[304]. Furthermore such frustrations only rarely gained any coherent collective expression even at work group level, as well-intentioned but naive stewards sought to operate along the lines set by management; scepticism grew about effective remedies; and this fueled a mixture of cynical resignation and subterranean bloody-mindedness[305].

In turn, however, this meant that there was little prospect of the

fulsome cooperation and boosted productivity which management had sought. Thus Nichols's judgement was that, following the implementation of the 'New Working Arrangements', the workers "were neither markedly more committed to efficiency as defined by management, nor more militant than before"[306]. The managers themselves recognised this, and viewed the limits of their achievements with a mixture of cynicism and a hope that eventually they would reap the benefits they had projected. I will now turn to a brief discussion of the character of workers' attitudes and activities during this period - to the ways in which they continued to cause management trouble, and how this was related to patterns of shopfloor consciousness - before making some critical comments on the analysis developed in the ChemCo studies.

As I have already noted, the ChemCo workers were not simply passive, but their opposition to management was largely informal, piecemeal, individualised and low key. Faced with both the rigours of process work, and management decisions on job allocation, time keeping and the like which infringed their ideas of fairness, independence and self-respect:

> "they have proceeded, as individuals, to work out a way of 'getting by' - in a few cases by licking up to the foremen, more often by playing dumb, sometimes by hitting out when everything gets too much, sometimes by resort to sabotage and theft (to deny the ends of management or in a small way to secure their own ends). Most generally of all by doing what they are told, but no more"[307].

Thus, as at Halewood, the conditions of labour for capital nurtured a form of 'refusal'. However, this did not involve an organised collective rebellion, but rather a complex spectrum of responses: these were more often defensive ways of 'getting by' than more active ways of 'getting back', and were almost always personal, covert and outside the ambit of organised trade unionism. Nichols suggests that the more assertive responses, be they deliberate skiving, arguing back with the foreman or sabotage, were the stock in trade of a minority of more overtly bloody-minded workers, who thereby explicitly defended their dignity and identity against the pressure and sacrifice of work; while the rest, about two-thirds of the workforce, though not entirely passive, were more likely to keep their heads down, to fall back on absenteeism, and to assert themselves only at opportune moments[308].

Such activities, and particularly the more 'bloody-minded' of them, could frustrate and inconvenience management. However, they could also make

life more difficult for other workers, when, for example, they had to face the risks arising from sabotage, or make good a short-fall in production. Thus a significant consequence of this pattern of conduct was that it generated real resentments and antagonisms between workers themselves[309]. Their recognition of such features means that in their analysis of these ways of coping with wage labour Nichols et al do not simply underwrite a celebration of 'refusals', but also seek to understand their limits and contradictions. Thus they note that many of these tactics, though they may offer some immediate satisfaction, leave the situation basically unchanged:

> "the most satisfying way ... is to put him into a state of blind rage, make sure he cannot pin anything on you, and then play stupid", but "resistance established through the 'indiscipline' of anti-work activities is of limited effectiveness"[310].

Indeed, such resistance may actively undermine the prospects for more effective, collective action, for:

> "it must also be faced that some of the bloody minded ... can also turn their aggression on their mates", and "a lot of the 'control' that men exercise at ChemCo is obtained at the personal expense of other workers"[311].

Furthermore, even when such practices as tampering with the equipment were condoned by workmates because they eased the flow of work, provided relief from work pressure, and boosted earnings, the social relations involved were contradictory. For such practices could also be tacitly accepted by management as a route to increased productivity and profitability, while they were absolved from responsibility for accidents arising from the pressures of production, so that individual workers were not only made to take the risks but also to carry the full responsibility for injuries to themselves and their fellow workers[312]. Having recognised these features of the 'refusals' of the ChemCo workers, Nichols et al nevertheless also insist, like Beynon in Working For Ford, that this range of activities still remains significant, both as a symptom of discontent and as a tacit challenge to management: as an indication that "many of them do not accept their lot in an untroubled, uncomplicated way"[313].

It should be emphasised that Nichols, Armstrong and Beynon do not suggest that all forms of 'refusal' at ChemCo were thoroughly individualised or equally divisive. Thus they cite examples of informal collective pressures on foremen to relax supervision or grant concessions on grading, and of informal workgroup arrangements (such as 'job and finish' or the

job rotation mentioned earlier) in a few areas, designed to ease or limit work pressures. Occasionally there was a more direct attempt by a whole group of workers to sabotage the actions of management, as in one notable incident when:

> "workers were incensed by the efforts of a new manager to run their plant flat out all the time: 'You have to have a real feel for the plant not just all slide-rule like him' they said, and carried out his instructions to the letter"[314].

The result was that the plant went down and there was a lot of heavy work cleaning it out, but they had made their point, and moreover the incident meant a black mark on that manager's record. However the authors are at pains to point out the exceptional character of such an incident. They suggest that this was partly because many of the processes seemed less vulnerable to such action, since "most of the process plants are not reputed to require the degree of 'feel' claimed for the one concerned in this incident"[315]. Furthermore it was a response to some exceptionally heavy-handed management, and the collusion of the foreman and the criticisms of fellow managers point up the extent to which the manager concerned had violated the firm's ethos of 'systems management' and sophisticated production priorities in organising the start-up:

> "generally, provided managers are prepared to talk to the blokes and 'be reasonable', they are respected for their superior technical knowledge"[316].

More generally, it was usually the case that even those collective responses to management which did occur were outside a trade union format. Thus, in sharp contrast to the Ford experience, it was only very rarely that the stewards were the mobilisers of pressure even upon supervisors, though there are a few hints that some stewards had tentatively begun to develop a more active role on some sections, especially during the implementation of the 'New Working Arrangements'. Despite these modest developments, though, there was usually an antipathy between the stewards and the more assertive of their members about many of the more 'bloody-minded' forms of rebelliousness, and this was the case not only among the management-sponsored stewards but also among most of the union loyalists. For the trade union moralism of the latter tended to place a premium on collective discipline and adherence to procedures, and thus to recoil from such 'bloody-mindedness' rather than seeking to understand and go beyond it[317].

This tension between the perspectives of many of the stewards and the

activities of many rank and file workers poses major questions about the relationships between workplace activity and consciousness among the ChemCo workforce. In the previous section I commented on how Beynon examined such questions about the dynamics of consciousness and action at the Halewood plant largely through the 'prism' of the organisation and perspectives of the stewards themselves[318]. However such a procedure, which had certain limitations even in the Ford study, was clearly inappropriate at ChemCo because of the relationship between stewards and rank and file workers which I have just noted. As a result Nichols et al were led to explore the relationship between consciousness and action in rather different way, on the one hand by discussing some of the dominant features and themes in shopfloor consciousness and on the other hand by considering the manner in which such themes and features were selectively developed and given distinctive inflections in the lives of specific workers.

This approach highlights the complexity of the patterns of consciousness and their relation to conduct on the ChemCo site, and Nichols et al emphasise that a key feature of that complexity concerns the contradictory, shifting and often inchoate character of workers' consciousness. This part of their argument clearly parallels some of those arising from the debate about 'social imagery' which I reviewed earlier in this chapter, especially that of Blackburn and Mann concerning the relationship between a contradictory and dualistic consciousness and the contradictory realities of wage labour itself[319]. However Nichols and his co-authors suggest more clearly and strongly than do Blackburn and Mann that such complexity and flux does not simply mean chaos, for certain themes and features emerge as central unifying elements in the understandings of these workers as "they try to live from day to day, to construct reasonably coherent pasts and futures, to maintain respect for themselves"[320]. Thus they suggest that it remains important to appreciate and analyse such strands of consciousness - to explore how they are deployed in the ideas of specific workers, and to consider how they relate both to patterns of experience and wider ideologies - without reifying them into neat typologies, and without abstracting them from the shifting social relations within which they are lodged. In these terms Nichols et al are willing to accept that at one level many of the ChemCo workers, in experiencing 'good wages' for hard labour, had a predominantly instrumental outlook on work; but they wish to argue not only that such an outlook arose out of the specific constraints and pressures of their wage labour (and in that sense I would suggest that it was an instrumentalised rather than an instrumentalist outlook), but also

that it was embedded in and transmuted by a variety of other themes and features which undermine the usefulness of the label 'instrumental'.

Four of these motifs of consciousness stand out as central to the analysis developed by Nichols et al, and these are fatalism, the compartmentalisation of consciousness, sacrifice, and a 'responsible' Labourism. In each case these themes gain some sustenance from the specific experiences of particular workers, but also resonate with aspects of dominant ideology as it is rehearsed particularly by the media. Thus the sense of fatalism and powerlessness is nourished by the experience of entrapment arising from shifts in the labour market and developments in management policy, and also by the seeming uncontestability of the centrally negotiated deals between the company and the union, as well as being reinforced by media portrayals of market forces and the like. In such circumstances the apparent inevitability of corporate power, coupled with an evident dependence upon the prosperity of the plant for continuing employment, helped to sustain a degree of puzzled acceptance of the rewards of shareholders and top management, but more generally it reinforced a sense of the givenness of such circumstances, so that workers "neither grant nor deny management or shareholders legitimacy ... management, like the job, like the shareholders, like capitalism, just <u>is</u>"[321]. A related feature of the outlooks of these workers concerns the compartmentalisation of their understanding of the spheres of work, consumption and politics, in which the first sphere, especially, tends to be seen as the realm of necessity and the inevitable. Armstrong provides outlines of the thinking of several specific workers which suggest that in combination fatalism and compartmentalisation can very effectively insulate the experience of work pressures and deprivations from the realm of 'politics', leaving the latter as a separate arena, sometimes of social reform unconnected with the experience of class relations in production or occasionally of the imposition of authoritarian political solutions[322].

Such arguments, coupled with the broader analysis of the interplay of management strategies and workers' responses which I have outlined above, provide the basis for a specific intervention into the general debate over the potentials of instrumentalism and workplace struggles for class consciousness and radicalisation. Building upon their analysis of class relations at ChemCo Nichols et al, like other marxian commentators, underline the extent to which the very contradictoriness and flux of consciousness, coupled with the active dynamic of lived class relations,

mean an important open-endedness and instability in patterns of consciousness and action, so that present non-militancy cannot be projected forward uncritically. However, they also argue against any simple 'explosions of consciousness' thesis, pointing out that:

> "ChemCo has provided an apt illustration of the inadequacies of simplistic notions that class consciousness and organised struggle spring spontaneously from the endemic conflicts of the capitalist system", and "of course things <u>can</u> change very quickly - but it has to be borne in mind that experience of events does not lead automatically to particular interpretations of those events"[323].

This critique of the notion of a spontaneous escalation of class conflict, together with the emphasis on the compartmentalised and fatalistic character of workers' consciousness, seems to involve a real convergence with Mann's analysis of consciousness and action, and this impression is reinforced by the absence of any developed analysis of the sources and consequences of these features apart from a rather sketchy appeal to the impact of dominant ideology. However the differences between the ChemCo analysis and that of Mann emerge more clearly in the treatments of the other two themes which I mentioned earlier, namely sacrifice and responsible Labourism.

In exploring the significance of the sense of sacrifice, which was frequently a central thread in the way the ChemCo workers understood the relationship between wages and the deprivations of non-skilled wage work, Nichols et al suggest firstly that it was given rather different emphases by different workers, depending particularly upon the character of their earlier work and labour market experience. Thus for some men, especially those who had experienced recurrant insecurity before finishing up at ChemCo, a sense of insecurity and a bemused fatalism predominated and feelings of sacrifice were translated into a despairing passivity. For others, however, often those who had earlier enjoyed a bit more control or fulfillment in work, sacrifice took on a more active sense of waste, which sometimes fueled a more assertive bloody-mindedness at work. Such feelings of sacrifice and waste, coupled with the spectrum of anti-work activities which I discussed earlier, underline the experience and the subterranean contestation of alienation in a much sharper fashion than Mann allows in his discussion, and in so doing point up the 'radical needs' which remain hardly articulated as 'interests' among these workers[324]. Beyond this, however, Nichols et al also recognise that these gut sentiments could gain a resonance with media ideological themes which reinforced their parochial

and negative character. In particular they suggest that, in circumstances where many of the ChemCo men remained protected from the direct impact or the immediate prospect of unemployment and yet trapped in their arduous labour for capital, their sense of 'sacrifices made' often interplayed with media presentations of the mythology of the 'doley' to nourish their antipathy to the unemployed[325]. Here, then, Nichols and Beynon trace out some elements of the complex ideological processes which, in a more problematical way than is allowed for in Mann's heavy emphasis on the logic of wage-focussed collective bargaining, encapsulate the alienating experience of wage labour within a pattern of non-militant consciousness and action.

Finally Nichols et al focus on another crucial aspect of this process by discussing the role of Labourism among ChemCo workers. Nichols explores this theme in most detail in relation to the experience and outlooks of a small grouping of foremen who had migrated from the North East to take on the job of supervision on the new site, but the relevance of his analysis is not confined to them alone[326]. In his discussion of these workers he traces in rather more detail than for other workers the manner in which their distinctive perspectives were related both to a particular pattern of lived experience and to wider cultural and ideological themes; and it is in this context that he identifies them as articulators of a significant and characteristic strand of Labourist ideology. The biographies of these men spanned a move from the North to the South which was also a move from the hard times of pre-war labour to the relatively better times of the post-war boom, and they made sense of their present very much in terms of a sentimentalised contrast between the warmth and solidarity of their home communities and the selfishness and indiscipline of modern workers - which included both the 'lazy' workers they supervised on the site, and 'mindless militants' elsewhere. Within this matrix of ideas these men sometimes expressed puzzlement about particular features of their immediate experience such as the managerial reorganisation of supervision, and even expressed apparently quite radical opinions on specific topics, but Nichols warns against any facile reading of the radical potentials of such responses. For, while they saw themselves as socialists and were Labour voters, their overall outlook embraced a conception of settled class relations in which management, workers and unions played their established and allotted roles:

> "for them the present represents a more or less unalterable order of things. Provided the government governs, management manages, and the unions safe-guard the workers' interests, should that ever be necessary

> (which at ChemCo they claim is not the case), they can get on with their jobs"[327].

In this context they tended to be dismissive of the grievances of the workers they supervised, while seeking to control them through a repertoire of banter and cajolery drawn from a shared class culture; and they were more likely than were the 'progressive' managers to endorse authoritarian political remedies for union militancy. At the same time they were increasingly fearful of contemporary changes which were undermining their established role, and were turning to a sectional unionisation to try to protect their privileged status; but still, in this context, which placed in question the sacrifices they had made in moving South:

> "their resentment is not directed at capital and capitalism, but at the progress manual workers have made since the war"[328].

The real shifts in the class experience of these men, and especially their distinctive career trajectories as foremen, seem likely to have given a particular, somewhat 'conservative' inflection to their Labourism; but Nichols argues convincingly that they had not performed an 'ideological somersault', for they continued to draw upon, and find a vitality in, well established and widespread strands of thinking within the politics and culture of Labourism. Thus not only did their thinking "probably differ little from that of the men they left behind" to become foremen, but more importantly it converged in important respects with the 'responsible' and moralistic union loyalism of such active trade unionists as Alfie[329]. It even found significant echoes in the more widespread though diffuse acceptance of trade unionism, coupled on the one hand with notions of fairness and justice and on the other hand with criticisms of militancy elsewhere, among many workers on the site; though in their case a sense of the short-comings of site union organisation must have given a somewhat different twist to these sentiments. Against this background a crucial argument of Nichols et al is that such perspectives (given a particular, fairly coherent rendition by the group of Northern foremen, but with wider and more diffuse relevance particularly among the scatter of experienced unionists) were recognised, colonised and reinforced in the incorporationist strategies of management which I outlined earlier:

> "corporate capital with its emphasis upon firmness and reason, upon the need for rules and consultation rather than confrontation, has colonised the rhetoric of a particularly British brand of socialism"[330].

Thus these management strategies not only embrace and constrain the

formal apparatus of the trade unions but also tend to neutralise the politics of the more experienced and politicised rank and file workers on such sites as Riverside. Isolated from alternative labour traditions and often operating simply as section stewards, their politics becomes insulated from the daily struggles of their workmates: an abstract ethical collectivism set against the individualised rebelliousness and parochialism of the bulk of workers. As I implied earlier, what this means is that the weaknesses of such immediate forms of worker resistance, arising out of an encounter between sophisticated 'progressive' management and an instrumentalised and fragmented workforce, are reinforced rather than repaired by the views and activities of such union loyalists. Here, then, Nichols et al develop a particularly important argument about the manner in which the 'radical needs' or 'fundamental interests' (my terms) of these workers fail to be articulated and expressed in the organised representation of their interests in union organisation, or in the dominant currents of political understanding within the workforce. At the same time they suggest that these processes remain unsettled and incomplete. In particular they highlight the significance of alternative conceptions of shopfloor organisation and mobilisation, for even among the ChemCo workforce there were a few activists who, drawing in one way or another upon alternative strands of labour movement ideology and experience, were seeking to develop different styles of workplace union activity which more actively sought to cope with and build upon the bloody-minded elements of shop-floor resistance. However, while such developments demonstrate continuing contention between different labour movement traditions and may gain leverage from some of the contradictions in management strategy, Nichols et al recognise that they are a long way from representing any significant disturbance to the entrenched pattern of corporate power, domesticated unionism and the resultant mixture of fatalism and bloody-mindedness among workers.

In developing these arguments the ChemCo case studies represent a particularly important contribution to marxian analysis, precisely because they provide an account of class relations at the point of production which explores the alienation of wage labour while at the same time explaining the absence of any developed challenge to capital even within the workplace. At the same time, <u>because</u> they are case studies and because they explore certain facets of the situation more fully than others, they raise further questions about the extent to which, and the conditions within which, such a pattern of class relations, rather than, say, the pattern of Halewood in the late 1960s, is likely to predominate. My critical reservations about

the ChemCo studies, like those concerning Working For Ford, relate directly to these questions, and involve firstly the problems associated with generalisation from specific factory studies and secondly the need for a more explicit and extended discussion of the conceptualisation of the relationship between experience, interests and consciousness of class relations in specific enterprises to facilitate the exploration of these wider relevances. Without these features there remains a danger that their subtle but necessarily incomplete discussions of the relationships between experience, struggle, organisation, consciousness and ideology will be short-circuited into one-sided generalisations focussed only upon the self-defeating dynamics of a search for personal identity in wage labour, or only the inevitable though flawed institutionalisation of capital-labour relations through centralised wage bargaining, or just the pervasive impact of dominant ideology as a buttress to managerial power[331]. In my necessarily brief comments I will focus particularly on the issues of the specific sectoral or corporate logic of management strategies; the bases of the contemporary appeal of responsible trade unionism; and the character of divisions within the ChemCo workforce which facilitated management control.

Nichols and his colleagues clearly recognise that any case study of a specific workforce provides only a problematical basis for generalisation, not least because "at any given time different segments of the working class can experience capitalism in many varied ways"[332]. Unfortunately, however, as with the study of Ford, they still tend to treat the Riverside complex as a direct exemplar of broader trends, without sufficient comment on the ways in which it needs to be located and understood as a specific study of a specific variant of class relations. In particular they want to argue that their case studies document:

> "a general tendency within big business. This tendency involves a clear attempt to deal with and incorporate trade unionism ... to the end of subjecting the labour force to a degree of order, regulation and control"[333].

Of course there are similarities and convergences of corporate policy, for example between Ford and ChemCo, but what this sort of characterisation tends to gloss over are potentially significant differences in the specific conditions and characteristics of corporate strategies. In this regard Nichols et al are somewhat ambiguous in their discussion, for they do note several features which seem to have conditioned the development, character and relative success of the sophisticated 'techno-bureaucratic' strategies of ChemCo management. In particular they recognise the distinctiveness of

the chemicals sector, dominated as it is by a few giant companies with very considerable oligopolistic leverage in the product market but with forms of capital equipment which put a premium on the orchestration of cooperation from their workforce. Thus they note, for example, that:

> "operating in the steadily expanding post-war market (and not so affected by the short term fluctuations as the engineering firms) they have been particularly conscious of the need to preserve 'good industrial relations'".[334]

Furthermore, they also suggest that even with the intensification of international competition in the 1970s, ChemCo and similar firms, helped in part by their access to state/EEC funding, were still in a more sheltered position than firms in many other sectors - and this was in some ways reflected in their personnel and industrial relations policies.

Nevertheless they say little about the ways in which variations in the extent and security of the employment conditions and wage concessions involved may on the one hand help to consolidate corporate strategy and underpin an accomodative trade unionism, or on the other hand serve to compromise a strategy of incorporation and weaken such unionism. In terms of their argument about the relationship between corporate strategy, institutionalised union bargaining and subterranean forms of class struggle (or indeed the alternative argument of Mann about aggressive economism and defensive job control) this leaves several unresolved questions which make generalisation difficult. In particular it poses the question of how far the institutionalisation of accomodative trade unionism at Che Co depended upon workers' experience of a fairly effective performance by the national wage bargainers, and even, perhaps, a fairly effective 'servicing' role by regional union officials, which, when compared with the experience of other groupings of workers, helped to sustain the mixture of fatalism, union loyalism and bloody-mindedness which they depict. In this regard it is worth noting that a similar set of issues are raised but not resolved in Gallie's comparison of French and British companies in another part of the chemicals sector, oil refining[335]. For in his work he suggests that the UK plants provided substantial scope for local bargaining and management concession-making on both wages and parochial job control issues, and that this was a central support for 'responsible' trade unionism; whereas the French plants represented a sharp contrast of both management strategy and union organisation and politics. At the same time, however, though he does provide some interesting discussion of the tightening pressures for productivity increases and 'de-manning' in the British refineries, his

preoccupation with national contrasts of corporate strategy and industrial relations leads him to neglect the question of the differential productivity and profitability of the refineries and thus the security or otherwise of their established patterns of industrial relations[336]. Thus in their different ways both Nichols et al and Gallie fail to explore the scope and the precariousness of the specific achievements of institutionalised union bargaining activities, which must have served as a continuing reference point for some of the strands of continuing union loyalism which the former recognise as of central significance in modulating the relationship between shop-floor 'refusals' and collective organisation. One final point worth adding in relation to this issue of the experience of trade unionism and the specificity of ChemCo concerns the specificity of the Riverside site <u>within</u> ChemCo: how far were workers on other sites or in other occupations (such as the craftsmen) caught within a similar web of relationships and antipathies between responsible trade unionism and anti-work activities; how far did their more organised activities condition the responses of the company and the national union officials while the Riverside workers remained the passive recipients of the results; and how successfully was <u>their</u> trade unionism regulated?[337]

Alongside these issues of the location of the ChemCo workers in relation to the experience of people in other factories, firms and sectors, and the character of the substantive achievements and limitations of institutionalised trade unionism, the final topic which I wish to raise concerns the analysis of the internal differentiation of the workforce on the ChemCo site. Nichols et al emphasise very effectively the ways in which management capitalised upon and sought to intensify the fragmentation of the workers on the site, but in some respects their discussion still appears to underplay some of those bases of such fragmentation which were less directly the product of conscious management strategy and yet made effective collective action more difficult. These concern on the one hand continuing differentiations of competences and experience within the labour process, and on the other hand the wider social sources of gender and racial divisions beyond the immediate production process.

In regard to the issue of expertise Nichols et al rightly criticise those commentators who have seen process operation as analogous to craft labour, but in mounting their critique they present an image of uniformly deskilled labour which appears to gloss over significant variations in experience and expertise which continue to differentiate various process

operations in terms of work tasks, job control, security, and potentially also bargaining leverage. Some of these differentiations emerge obliquely in the discussion of sabotage, while others are hinted at in comments on the contradictory features of the 'mobile operator' task; while alongside such subtle differences must be set the distinctiveness of the craftsmen's position (excluded from the study by management).[338] Together they amount to a quite complex spectrum of forms of labour, which any more effective form of workplace trade unionism would have to work on, both in developing the sectional bargaining leverage of such groupings and in seeking to unify the workforce as a whole. In regard to gender divisions Armstrong, in particular, develops an interesting analysis of the manner in which management both structures and exploits those divisions; but, as Cunnison suggests, his analysis tends to gloss over the manner in which the immediate conflicts of interest which result also "arise from the different material positions of men and women in domestic life and the paid economy"[339]. Though elsewhere in their study they recognise that these women were often more trapped in their positions at ChemCo than were most of the men they worked with, it is at this point that the limitations of workplace-based case studies are an obvious (and acknowledged) constraint on the development of the analysis, and despite the caveats the consequence does tend to be an over-emphasis on the direct agency of management in decomposing the workforce. As a result some of the sources of sectionalism and antagonism among workers in the more indirect effects of corporate policies and in wider social processes may be underplayed, so that some of the sources of the appeal of some strands of dominant ideology may be inadequately understood. In this regard I simply want to add the note concerning racial divisions that, while Nichols and Beynon suggest that the common experience of wage labour "dominated any prejudice or cultural difference that might serve as a serious source of division", they also document "a deal of racial prejudice" among both workers and supervisors together with clear barriers to the promotion of black workers, so that the relationship between these features in the lives of the ChemCo workers remains unclear and deserving of further discussion.[340]

In conclusion, then, Nichols, Armstrong and Beynon provide a case study which is not only a powerful refutation of many of the optimistic diagnoses of the demise of class antagonisms in the 'progressive'chemicals sector, but also challenges alternative 'instrumentalist' explanations of non-militancy and institutionalised trade unionism. For though they document the limitations of workplace unionism and the substantial fatalism of workers' consciousness at ChemCo, they also demonstrate that through an

enduring sense of sacrifice and a variety of subterranean rebellions these workers continued to express, even when they did not articulate, interests which were at odds with the logic of capital. Furthermore they show that the cash nexus remained more or less thoroughly instrumentalised (with conflicts over effort and control remaining largely covert, parochial and individualised) neither as an automatic outcome of market choices and calculations nor simply because of the successes of institutionalised wage bargaining, but as a result of the power and strategic sophistication of corporate capital, the continuing fragmentation of the workforce, and their insulation from more critical aspects of labour traditions and forms of organisation.

Thus the ChemCo study, like Beynon's of Ford, provides an analysis which escapes from the stark simplicities of either escalating consciousness or inevitable accomodation by tracing the specific dynamics of class relations, organisation and consciousness in a much more subtle fashion; though, again like Working For Ford, the specificity of the processes involved tends to be glossed over in treating the case study as an exemplar of wider class relations, without any extensive or explicit consideration of how it is to be located as one instance of a broader range of relations between capital and labour in the immediate production process. This indicates the importance of both a continuing tradition of marxian ethnographic studies of the sort which have been inspired by the studies I have reviewed, and more systematic discussion of their specificity and implications.

Conclusions

In earlier chapters I have argued, first that the Affluent Worker project operated with a market-based conception of class situation, and second that many of the weaknesses of the Affluent Worker analysis were rooted in that conceptualisation[341]. In particular I argued that this meant that there was no proper analysis of the active process of class relations in the immediate process of production, which in turn led to a truncated treatment of the dynamics of workplace consciousness and action. Furthermore I suggested that the market-based conceptualisation of unities and divisions in the experience of wage labour promoted an inconsistent treatment of the problem of class boundaries. In each of these respects I also argued that interpretations of the Affluent Worker study which emphasised its divergence from an initially clearly formulated class analysis have failed to appreciate the manner in which

the neo-weberian market analysis of class situations continued to structure the later work, or the extent to which some of the difficulties and shifts of interpretation themselves arose from fundamental dilemmas in completing such an analysis. Thus in these chapters I have argued in some detail that the Affluent Worker study may be regarded as an exemplar of neo-weberian class analysis, both in the overall development of the argument and in terms of the ambiguities and shortcomings of that argument.

In this chapter I have sought to trace out the continuing centrality of a market conception of class and the absence of any developed analysis of production relations in much of the ensuing debate on social imagery. In particular I have suggested firstly that the initial debate surrounding Lockwood's article was characterised by an impoverished and ad hoc consideration of the character and dynamics of production relations; and secondly that much of the discussion of the volatility and variation of imagery continued to be tied to market-based analyses. In this context I suggested that both the neo-weberian theorists of the manual labour market, such as Goldthorpe and Mann, and some neo-marxist analysts of the cash-nexus, particularly Westergaard, worked with rather broad generic characterisations of the experience of wage labour, which made too simple a connection between the fundamental features of wage labour and the specific forms which they take. Thus I have argued that each of these approaches fails to address the manner in which the general features of wage labour underpin recurrant variations and a significant heterogeneity of work organisation and experience. At least in part this arises from their common focus on market relations without proper consideration of the character of class relations within the immediate production process; with the result that variations in the experience of wage work are construed primarily in terms of the degrees to which specific groupings of workers experience their situation as a pure market situation, unencumbered by traditional and parochial social ties.

Against such analyses I have suggested that adequate leverage on the issues raised by the documentation of the ambiguity, complexity and movement of social imagery requires both a fuller investigation of the contention between capital and labour in particular labour processes, and specific attention to the interplay between parochial interpretations of the immediate experience of class relations, different labour traditions and active processes of mobilisation and demobilisation. Towards the end

of the chapter I have argued that the marxian ethnographies of class relations in the workplace develop precisely these features to provide a more adequate analysis of the relationship between the experience of wage labour and distinctive patterns of consciousness and action. Throughout the chapter I have also argued, in part in criticism of the typological treatments of variations in the experience of wage workers and in part to begin to locate and qualify the analyses provided by the marxian ethnographers, that unities and divisions in the experience of wage labour need to be related to shifts and variations in the character of corporate strategies in the organisation of both the production process and the political apparatus of production. As a conclusion to this chapter and this volume of my thesis I want to comment briefly on each of these themes, using Mann's analysis of aggressive economism and some of the dual labour market arguments in turn as points of reference for my reflections.

During the course of my discussion of specific empirical studies in this and earlier chapters I have commented briefly on Mann's diagnosis at several points, so here I simply want to summarise the overall assessment which emerges from these comments. Mann develops his argument on the basis of the separation between work and non-work spheres in market capitalism, and the manner in which bargaining between labour and capital operates on that separation by institutionalising a pattern of aggressive economism and defensive job control. Thus, despite his own criticisms of specific features of the Affluent Worker study, his diagnosis converges quite closely with that of Goldthorpe et al, though it is founded upon a more general argument about the character of bargaining over the purchase and sale of labour rather than being grounded in claims about experience within particular labour markets. In particular he grounds his argument in the claim that, while control issues have continued to be zero-sum matters which have unsettled class relations, this has been compensated by successful bargaining over wages based in the willingness and capacity of employers to make wage concessions.[342] Similarly, despite his critique of convergence arguments and his emphasis upon the significance of divergent bargaining trajectories and labour movement politics in France and Italy on the one hand and the US and UK on the other, his argument develops towards a universal emphasis upon the limited potentials of workplace struggles and labour movement politics. This emphasis arises from his argument that the underlying logic of capitalist employment relations is of the sort just outlined, while authoritarian paternalist management policies of the sort which fuel worker radicalism are the product of archaic features of employers'

ideologies which are at odds with any purely capitalist logic.[343]

His argument about economism and defensive job control is most central to his analysis of consciousness and action among workers in Britain. It leads him to argue, against the end of ideology theorists, that workers experience subordination, deprivation and alienation in work as a consequence of the wage-work nexus, but also to suggest that such alienation issues largely in a fatalistic and pragmatic acceptance and a contradictory and dualistic consciousness. His argument about the archaic character of authoritarian and repressive management is more central to his formulation of a modified 'end of ideology' thesis, in which he emphasises that the underlying logic of employment relations conduces towards compromise bargaining, so that the gap between revolutionary rhetoric and pragmatic practice will quite likely undercut established radical traditions; though he does allow that the circuits of mutual suspicion and hostility originating in pre-capitalist social relations may be quite persistent in the spheres of movement ideology and worker consciousness.[344]

However, while many of the studies I have reviewed in this chapter have documented specific forms of contradictory consciousness, often characterised by a confused mixture of radicalism, scepticism and fatalism, the marxian ethnographies in particular differ from Mann in emphasising not only the uneasy and open-ended character of this consciousness but also the unsettled and unsettling character of the anti-work activity with which workers continue to respond to their abasement. Furthermore, they suggest that the processes which reinforce this pattern are rather more complex than Mann allows, though they in their turn may understate the effective role of institutionalised concession-making, especially in the wages sphere, in sustaining settled collective bargaining. In particular both Beynon and Nichols et al explore some of the ways in which institutionalised bargaining relationships nurture a disenchantment with social democratic trade unionism, in the first case involving a more radical factory consciousness coupled with widespread cynicism about the Labour Party and union officialdom, and in the second a mutually destructive tension between responsible Labourism and bloody-mindedness. As such they indicate some of the ways in which the social democratic variant of union organisation, activity and consciousness is marked by a flawed relationship between ideology and achievement no less than is Communist unionism; and they also show how the resultant tensions and volatility provide the space, albeit limited, within which continuing contention between alternative conceptions of the labour movement (and

working class politics) occurs. While Mann focusses his attention upon such contention at the level of central labour movement institutions and their specific national trajectories, and thus leaves the place of shop-floor unionism and steward organisation more or less unexplored, both Beynon and Nichols et al focus very much upon the various currents of opinion and experience at that local level as an indicator of the persistenc of varied strands of labour movement interpretation and how they interplay with the parochial experience of wage labour (thus developing some of the insights which were largely implicit in Westergaard's discussion of social imagery and consciousness which I discussed earlier).

In addition it should also be noted that these authors move away from the static or cyclical character of Mann's analysis not only in regard to the issue of contention between different labour movement traditions and styles of workplace unionism, but also in regard to the understanding of management strategies. In particular Nichols et al recognise the continuing capacity of ChemCo to fund wage concessions, but they do not treat this as a necessarily permanent feature and they emphasise that it is matched by corporate pressures to increase productivity, not least through the intensification of labour; while Beynon traces the shifts between soft and hard line policies at Fords in the areas of both wages and effort. What this underlines is that any pattern of defensive job control will be unsettled, not only through the uneven variety of forms (but problematical efficacy) of active bloody-mindedness or through the real but limited advances of workplace collective action, but also (and crucially) by managerial attempts to regulate or dismantle whatever parochial forms of job control do exist.

As I have noted, these ethnographies pose unresolved questions, both about the specific conditions under which different sorts of managerial offensives may occur, and about the range of relationships between workplace struggles and labour movement traditions. Nevertheless, not only does Beynon's case study of recurrant phases of the management hard line at Ford throw considerable doubt upon Mann's emphasis on the merely archaic character of authoritarian management, but the comparison of ChemCo and Ford suggests some of the conditions, in terms of networks of contacts and experience, which may nurture some escalation of consciousness and organisation through the process of struggle[345]. Thus, while I have wanted to suggest that both Beynon and Nichols et al gloss over somewhat the gains involved in settled and institutionalised bargaining, which may reinforce

support for 'responsible' Labourist trade unionism among some activists as well as among some rank and file workers, it remains the case that they chart very clearly the conditions which subvert that pattern, and point to the circumstances under which partial but real challenges to such bargaining and unionism may be mounted: features which Mann virtually ignores. Thus, against his 'impossibilist' perspective, I read Beynon et al as advocates of a modest possibilism, well aware of the dangers of romanticising shop-floor consciousness and action, but insistent upon the problematical and contested open-endedness of workers' interests and capacities as these are grounded in the day to day realities of workplace struggle. For them, then, the dominant forms of trade unionism and Labour politics (and also the sociological perspectives which accompany them) threaten, but fail to pre-empt, the real potentials of collective mobilisation and class consciousness of workers within the capitalist labour process. As such they begin to provide the basis for a far more sophisticated discussion of the limits and possibilities of trade unionism and the relationship between shop-floor experience, mobilisation and demobilisation and consciousness than is offered by either an unreconstructed Leninism or Mann's impossibilism, and here again begin to fulfill the programmatic promises contained in Westergaard's brief commentary on the Affluent Worker project[346].

One of the distinctive features of the general analysis of collective bargaining and class consciousness developed by Mann is that it offers a characterisation of shared features of class awareness linked to generic features of the relations between capital and labour, while variations in the character of these features and resultant patterns of unevenness, division and sectionalism are given only limited attention[347]. This is also a characteristic of the somewhat similar analysis developed by Hill, who also grounds his diagnosis of a shared low-key class consciousness in an analysis of the institutionalised pattern of collective bargaining, though he suggests that both the achievements and the vulnerabilities of Labourist trade unionism have been somewhat understated by Mann[348]. In comparison with these general accounts the marxian ethnographies of Beynon, Nichols and Armstrong register something of the specificity of class struggle in particular sectors, firms and workplaces; but at the same time they do little to theorise this specificity in their treatment of each case as an exemplar of general trends. In relation to all these analyses I wish to argue, in part on the basis of the review of specific case studies which I have presented in this chapter, that the uneven character of the gains and

erosions of wages and conditions experienced by different groupings of workers, and thus the specific forms of their experience of wage labour, must be given a more central place in analyses of the dynamics of trade unionism, workplace conflict and consciousness. This is important not only in relation to one of the points made by Blackburn and Mann in their labour market study, namely that quite minor variations in the experience of wage labour may assume considerable significance against the background of the uncertainties and pressures of wage work. It is also important because within the broader parameters of exploitation, alienation and struggle specific groupings of workers may enjoy significant and relatively long-term advantages in comparison with their earlier position or the positions of other groupings of workers. Related arguments have, of course, been developed quite systematically in recent years by theorists of dual or segmented labour markets, such as Edwards in the United States and Friedman in Britain, and to round off this conclusion to part one of my thesis it will be useful to comment briefly on the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches in the light of the literature which I have reviewed[349].

The emphasis of radical dual labour market theorists such as Edwards and Friedman has been on the sophisticated bargaining and administrative strategies through which managements have sought to divide and rule wage workers. Edwards, in common with other US writers, emphasises the way in which managements responded to the incipient massification of manual workers by developing internal job ladders and hierarchies. On this basis he provides an account of the development of a system of corporate bureaucratic control which has certain parallels with the Nichols et al discussion of sophisticated techno-bureaucratic control at ChemCo; while suggesting that only some workers are drawn into such a structure of grading, bureaucratised discipline and attempts to orchestrate commitment, with other workers relegated to subordinate and secondary labour markets. However, while such a general account directs valuable attention towards differences of experience among workers, there are several major problems with this analysis. Firstly it suggests that there are several distinct and stable segments of the labour market and the labour process, each characterised by a distinctive structure of control, while the studies of Ford and ChemCo for example suggest more complex and shifting corporate strategies.[350] Edwards does recognise that cycles of boom and recession overlay and qualify the clear-cut pattern of stable labour market segmentation which emerges from his account, shifting the balance of opportunities and insecurities across

the whole employment spectrum and both altering and attenuating the boundaries between segments, but this is not really integrated into his analysis in any systematic way. Both the Blackburn and Mann study of Peterborough and such case studies as those of the docks, shipyards and steel suggest that these features are central to the experience of unities and differentiation among the British workforce and thus underline the limitations of Edwards's account. A second and related problem is that, while the potential threat posed by massification is central to his argument, the specific sectional struggles of workers are accorded little significance alongside an emphasis on the organisational resources of the oligopolistic firm. Edwards gives only fleeting recognition to the ways in which trade union organisation may give a different inflection to corporate bureaucratic control when he notes that "management retained many more prerogatives where unionism was excluded than where joint administration was accepted", but this in turn raises further questions about the internal variety and complexity within the broad control strategies and associated labour markets which he delineates[351]. Thus, while Edwards and related writers have provided a useful broad brush account of sources of heterogeneity and division among wage workers arising from the dynamics of the organisation of production, that account combines a somewhat conspiratorial view of management strategies with limited attention to the contradictions and shifts of those strategies or the parochial and sectional leverage and struggle which groupings of workers develop in such circumstances; features which are of evident significance in the case studies which I have reviewed in this chapter.

Friedman's version of a radical segmented labour market analysis differs from that of Edwards in all these respects. Thus he emphasises the contradictions besetting management strategies, the impact of active sectional struggles waged by workers, the conditional status of sectional advantages and finally the fluidity of boundaries between 'core' and 'peripheral' workers. Thus his analysis, grounded in a rather schematic history of sections of the British working class, appears to capture more adequately some of the features which emerge from the case studies I have discussed. At the same time Friedman's analysis, too, has important limitations, for his conceptualisation of these features remains at a very high level of abstraction, and at that level his categories of 'responsible autonomy' and 'direct control' remain rather vague and all-embracing. Thus 'responsible autonomy', for example, may operate at many different levels - work organisation, wages, job ladders, institutionalised bargaining or

participation - and may involve various mixes of co-option and concessions to groups or individuals. Furthermore, his analysis of the bases of 'responsible autonomy' works with a fairly crude combination of the room for manoeuvre afforded to monopoly capital during the boom and the leverage afforded to organised labour through the depletion of the reserve army of labour, which gives little analytical purchase on the occupational and sectoral specificities of experience revealed in the case studies. Thus, though his conceptualisation of the underlying dilemmas facing managements is analytically suggestive, it cannot be regarded as a substitute for more detailed analyses of the exigencies of accumulation in specific sectors and firms, and the distinctive patterns of class relations which they involve.

At this point it is appropriate for me to note that many of the empirical studies which I have reviewed earlier, such as the Affluent Worker study itself, and those of Brown et al, Blackburn and Mann, Davis and the marxian ethnographies, directly or indirectly acknowledge the apparent specificity of the position of skilled workers in the labour process and the labour market. Furthermore the character of this specificity - their particular bases of leverage within the work process, their patterns of security and insecurity in the face of rationalisation and deskilling, and their distinctive forms of collective organisation and consciousness - is clearly inadequately grasped by the rather general characterisations provided by radical dual labour market analysis, such as 'the primary labour market' or 'responsible autonomy'. My empirical case study of skilled engineering workers in Sunderland during a period of corporate rationalisation, which is presented in part two of this thesis, will provide an opportunity to explore and discuss this specificity in more detail. In seeking to understand the position and experience of such craftsmen in relation to the exigencies of profitability and the strategies of capitalist managements, the case study will also provide an opportunity to pursue further the theme that marxian analyses of class relations in production need to address the distinctive forms taken by such relations in specific firms and sectors, not least as a basis for understanding the distinctive inflections given to trade union organisation and workplace consciousness among different sections of the working class.

chapter 4: footnotes

1 For the background see Colin Crouch The Politics of Industrial Relations Glasgow 1979, chapters 3 and 4, and more generally Andrew Gamble Britain in Decline London 1981.

2 Some indication of the centrality of the literature reviewed below can be gained from the place it is given in general treatments of class in such recent textbooks as Tony Bilton et al Introductory Sociology London 1981, chapter 4.5, and David Lee and Howard Newby The Problem of Sociology London 1983, part 4.10.

3 David Lockwood "Sources of Variation in Working-Class Images of Society" Sociological Review 1966. The main contributions to be considered are those collected in Martin Bulmer (ed) Working Class Images of Society London 1975; together with Stephen Hill The Dockers London 1976; R.M. Blackburn and Michael Mann The Working Class in the Labour Market London 1979; and Howard H. Davis Beyond Class Images London 1979.

4 In particular Huw Beynon Working For Ford Harmondsworth 1973 (and new edition with additional preface and final chapters 1984); Theo Nichols and Peter Armstrong Workers Divided Glasgow 1976; and Theo Nichols and Huw Beynon Living With Capitalism London 1977. I will also look at a study by H.F. Moorhouse and C.W. Chamberlain which looks at the experience and consciousness of workers in the context of housing tenure and conflict over council rents, and takes up some of the issues addressed by the marxian ethnographies of work in a non-work setting.

5 In particular Michael Mann Consciousness and Action among the Western Working Class London 1973, and the debate about labour market dualism.

6 Lockwood provides a substantial defence of his position in two articles in Bulmer (ed) Images, "In Search of the Traditional Worker" and "The Radical Worker: a Postscript".

7 John Westergaard "The Withering Away of Class: a Contemporary Myth" in P. Anderson and R. Blackburn (eds) Towards Socialism London 1965, p 108. It is worth noting at this point the complexity of the positions adopted in some of these discussions. Thus Richard Hoggart in The Uses of Literacy London 1957, one of the key texts for the analysis of the texture of community, not only distinguished the shared understandings and informal solidarities of working class life from the organised collectivism and politicised consciousness of the minorities of labour movement activists, stressing the relative marginality of the latter. He also utilised his analysis of daily life to challenge the agendas of the organised movement in terms of an unromanticised insistence on the need to address and revitalise the resilient features of working class cultural forms (see esp. pp 5, 61, and 264-268 where the challenge to established agendas is made explicit).

8 Lockwood in Bulmer Images p 17 (reprint of original "Sources of Variation" article).

9 Westergaard "Radical Class Consciousness: a Comment" in Bulmer (ed) Images p 252, and similar points in John Westergaard and Henrietta Resler Class in a Capitalist Society London 1975 pp 381-421.

10 Bulmer (ed) Images p 252.

11 Ibid p 258.

12 Ibid p 241, and at several other points in his contributions.

13 Ibid p 259.

14 Ibid p 241, p 249, and the characterisation of the issue on p 258 in terms of "the emergence of a radical class consciousness has its precondition in the affinity between the theoretical consciousness of socialist sociology and the practical consciousness of working class life".

15 Ibid pp 242-244.

16 Ibid p 254, esp. the critique of Parkin, and the similar argument in Westergaard and Resler Class pp 394-398.

17 Frank Parkin Class Inequality and Political Order London 1972, esp. chapter 3. Westergaard's criticisms are referenced in footnote 15 while Lockwood's comments are in Bulmer (ed) Images pp 257-258, with similar points made in relation to Mann on p 248.

18 Lockwood's treatment of working class radicalism in these terms is in Bulmer (ed) Images p 257.

19 These points are also developed in the work of C.W. Chamberlain and H.F. Moorhouse, for instance in "Lower Class Attitudes Towards the British Political System" Sociological Review vol 22, 1974 pp 503-525, This work furnished an empirical exploration of several of the themes raised by Westergaard, and will be considered further below.

20 J. Westergaard "The Rediscovery of the Cash Nexus" in R. Miliband and J. Saville (eds) The Socialist Register 1970, discussed in the previous chapter.

21 Westergaard in Bulmer (ed) Images pp 255-256.

22 Parkin's treatment of the subordinate value system parallels Lockwood's discussion of parochial imagery in this respect. See Parkin Class Inequality pp 88-96, where he begins with an emphasis on ambivalence but moves towards a stress on the limited and limiting character of subordinate values.

23 The essays referred to in the next few paragraphs all appear in Bulmer (ed) Images. They are:
Jim Cousins and Richard Brown "Patterns of Paradox: Shipbuilding Workers' Images of Society";
Colin Bell and Howard Newby "The Sources of Variation in Agricultural Workers' Images of Society";
Roderick Martin and R.H. Fryer "The Deferential Worker?";
R.M. Blackburn and M. Mann "Ideology in the Non-skilled Working Class".

24 Bulmer (ed) Images p 74 and pp 148-155.

25 Ibid pp 67-72.

26 Howard Newby The Deferential Worker Harmondsworth 1977, pp 386-406.

27 Bulmer (ed) Images pp 98-109.

28 Ibid p 74.

29 Ibid p 74, and more generally Richard Hyman Strikes Glasgow 1972 pp 146-155.

30 Newby Deferential Worker pp 384 and 387.

31 Bulmer (ed) Images pp 147-8.

32 Ibid p 152.

33 Ibid p 72 on 'latent proletarianism' and p 57 for quote.

34 Ibid pp 241, 247-8.

35 Ibid pp 247-8.

36 Ibid p 248.

37 Newby Deferential Worker p 402.

38 Bulmer (ed) Images p 156.

39 Ibid p 245. The full quotation is "a highly simplified model, taking extreme types, cannot be directly applied to particular instances without interpreting and elaborating the variables in the light of the underlying assumptions".

40 Ibid pp 242-244

41 Ibid p 155, and also the discussion in Blackburn and Mann Working Class in Labour Market, esp. chapter 10.

42 Bulmer (ed) Images p 57.

43 Newby Deferential Worker p 385. My emphasis, though Newby goes on to emphasise the centrality of the analysis of the deferential relationship in the following paragraph.

44 Bulmer (ed) Images pp 77-78, and the discussion of labour market strategies on p 60.

45 Ibid pp 76-79.

46 Martin and Fryer comment on the differences between the attitudes of younger and older men; Blackburn and Mann discuss the distinctive perspectives of the downwardly mobile 'skidder'; and Newby speculates on the imprint of earlier industrial experience on the views of farm workers.

47 Bulmer (ed) Images pp 109-110, and pp 80-81.

48 Ibid p 240.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid, pp 80-81 and pp 93-95, together with R.K. Brown et al "The Contours of Solidarity: Social Stratification and Industrial Relations in Shipbuilding" British Journal of Industrial Relations 1972, and Newby Deferential Worker, esp. chapters 3 and 5.

51 The discussion of the transformation of paternalism occurs in Robert Moore "Religion as a Source of Variation in Working-class Images of Society" and in Martin and Fryer, both in Bulmer (ed) Images.

52 Bulmer (ed) Images pp 255-256.

53 Westergaard and Resler Class parts 1-4.

54 Ibid p 343.

55 Ibid p 348 and pp 401-402.

56 Ibid p 401-421, following arguments made in John Westergaard "The Rediscovery of the Cash Nexus" in R. Miliband and J. Saville (eds) Socialist Register 1970, and in "Radical class consciousness: a comment".

57 Westergaard and Resler Class p 418, and the more extensive discussion of the strengths and limitations of a radical ideology "at half-cock" on pp 402-408 and in the other articles mentioned in footnote 55.

58 Bulmer (ed) Images pp 259-261.

59 See for example the discussions in John Holloway and Sol Picciotto (eds) State and Capital: a Marxist Debate London 1978; Colin Crouch (ed) State and Economy in Contemporary Capitalism London 1979; and John Urry The Anatomy of Capitalist Societies: the Economy, Civil Society and the State London 1981.

60 These are features which have been investigated most thoroughly in the debate about the 'corporatist' character of state intervention in the 1960s and 1970s. See especially Leo Panitch Social Democracy and Industrial Militancy Cambridge 1976, and Crouch Politics of Industrial Relations for extensive discussions; and Leo Panitch "Recent Theorisations of Corporatism: Reflections on a Growth Industry" B.J.S. 1980, for an overview.

61 Westergaard and Resler Class pp 224-236 and 401-421.

62 For a critical discussion of 'Manifesto marxism' see Stuart Hall "The 'Political' and the 'Economic' in Marx's Theory of Classes" in Alan Hunt (ed) Class and Class Structure London 1977, and Richard Johnson "Three Problematics: elements of a theory of working class culture" in John Clarke et al (eds) Working Class Culture London 1979.

63 See Westergaard "Cash Nexus" and Westergaard and Resler Class.

64 Westergaard and Resler Class p 347, and pp 403-408.

65 There are some hints about differentiation in ibid pp 347-348, but these tend to be seen as 'complexities of detail which obscure the simplicity of the picture as a whole'.

66 Westergaard and Resler Class p 395, and in Bulmer (ed) Images p 252, especially the discussion of T. Chalmers The Christian and Civil Economy of Large Towns Glasgow 1821-26. For the misreading see the otherwise instructive essay by Eva Brook and Dan Finn "Working Class Images of Society and Community Studies" in CCCS (ed) On Ideology London 1978, p 134.

67 Blackburn and Mann Working Class in Labour Market p 296, and the indication of proportions on p 41 and p 277.

68 Ibid p 296.

69 Ibid esp. pp 286-7.

70 Ibid pp 287-9 and 293-6.

71 Ibid pp 39-42; 283-5; and 298-303. On p 298 Blackburn and Mann say of the craft/non-craft divide "this is an important division, considerably reducing the homogeneity and class solidarity of manual workers". In addition the study documents significant though not radical segregation between immigrant and non-immigrant workers, and again the sample probably understates this, this time by excluding Asian workers without English. On these points see pp 49 and 246-256, esp. 254-255 where it is recognised that "among our relatively privileged working-class immigrants....just over a third in the case of coloured Asians are occupying clearly segregated, low-level jobs".

72 See the hints in the discussion of the different firms in ibid pp 50-59, but also the general paucity of discussion of collective and sectional bargaining.

73 Ibid p 300.

74 Ibid p 302.

75 Thus the discussion of the terrain of sectional trade unionism parallels that in Rubery's critique of dual labour market theories, in Jill Rubery "Structured labour markets, worker organisation and low pay" Cambridge Journal of Economics 1978 vol 2 pp 17-36, though she does not draw such generally pessimistic conclusions.

76 Though there are some brief, equivocal remarks about state intervention and the 'social contract' on the final pages. See Blackburn and Mann Working Class in Labour Market pp 302-303.

77 R.L. Davis and Jim Cousins "The 'New Working Class' and the Old" in Bulmer (ed) Images pp 192-205, together with J.M. Cousins and R.L. Davis "'Working Class Incorporation' - A Historical Approach with Reference to the Mining Communities of S.E. Northumberland 1840-1890" in Frank Parkin (ed) The Social Analysis of Class Structure London 1974.

78 Cousins and Davis "Working Class Incorporation" p 276.

79 This is the main theme of Davis and Cousins "New Working Class".

80 Ibid p 203.

81 Though Blackburn and Mann speculate on some ways in which the structuring of local labour markets in some areas may differ from that in Peterborough, this does not really lead them to qualify their position. See Blackburn and Mann Working Class in Labour Market pp 284-5.

82 Cousins and Davis "Working Class Incorporation" p 276. Richard Hyman's analysis of occupational shifts is provided in "Occupational Structure, Collective Organisation and Industrial Militancy" in Colin Crouch and Alessandro Pizzorno The Resurgence of Class Conflict in Western Europe vol 2, London 1978.

83 See the figures on fluctuations in membership in Cousins and Davis "Working Class Incorporation" p 290, and the comments on militancy in Davis and Cousins "New Working Class" pp 201-202, though of necessity this theme is not pursued very fully in these brief discussions.

84 See especially the programmatic statement in Cousins and Davis "Working Class Incorporation" pp 285-286.

85 Ibid p 293.

86 Such arguments have been developed more recently in a fuller fashion by Urry Anatomy of Capitalist Societies, esp. chapters 2 and 3. Unlike Cousins and Davis he does not conflate the discussion of production relations with the analysis of the commodity form, but develops an argument about the necessary autonomy of the reproduction of labour power and of state activity in a system of private commodity production and 'free' wage labour, though in turn he is apt to define classes in terms of their constitution in civil society rather than in terms of social relations of production.

87 Johnson "Three Problematics" p 210.

88 The label 'impossibilist' is applied by Cousins and Davis "Working Class Incorporation" p 280.

89 Hill Dockers; Chamberlain and Moorhouse "Attitudes towards Political System", and also H.F. Moorhouse and C.W. Chamberlain "Lower Class Attitudes to Property: Aspects of the Counter-Ideology" Sociology vol 8, 1974 pp 387-405, and H.F. Moorhouse "Attitudes to Class and Class Relationships in Britain" Sociology vol 10, 1976 pp 469-496; Davis Beyond Class Images; Beynon Ford; Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided; and Nichols and Beynon Capitalism.

90 Hill Dockers p 188 for power and inequality, pp 189-191 on patterns of social imagery, p 184 on material advance and pp 180-182 on children's jobs.

91 Ibid pp 111-115 on 'harmony', p 135 for stewards as 'lubricants', p 148-9 for solidarity, and pp 138-9 for management incompetence.

92 Ibid p 139 on union power and p 132 for critical comments on representation.

93 Ibid p 139 and table 7.4 p 221.

94 Ibid pp 188-9.

95 See chapter 2 pp 102-103, and the discussion later in this chapter.

96 Hill Dockers p 191.

97 Ibid p 115 for an explicit statement that "this harmonious situation reflected the mens' power", and p 112 for views on higher pay.

98 Ibid pp 139-142.

99 See especially Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner The Dominant Ideology Thesis London 1980, and Stephen Hill Competition and Control at Work London 1981, together with the critique of Abercrombie et al by C.A. Rootes "The Dominant Ideology Thesis and its Critics" Sociology vol 15, 1981 pp 436-444.

100 Hill Dockers p 141.

101 Ibid, esp. pp 139-140 and p 142.

102 Mann Consciousness and Action on the one hand; and Tony Lane The Union Makes Us Strong London 1974, esp. chapters 7 and 8, and Richard Hyman Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism London 1971, on the other hand.

103 Hill Dockers p 149 for quotation.

104 Ibid p 140.

105 See especially David F. Wilson Dockers: the impact of industrial change Glasgow 1972, pp 126-133 and 196-205.

106 This is a central feature of the analyses of class consciousness in the marxian ethnographies of work discussed below.

107 This argument has implications for the more general critiques of the 'dominant ideology' thesis mounted by Abercrombie et al Dominant Ideology and in Hill Competition and Control chapter 10, for as Rootes "Dominant Ideology" notes, these authors attack a particularly vulgar version of this thesis.

108 This is strongly stated in Hill Dockers conclusions, and reiterated in Hill Competition and Control pp 220-223.

109 See pp 232-234 above.

110 See Hill Dockers chapter 2 for the discussion of gang piecework, and pp 28-9 and 54-55 for the discussion of tacit skills.

111 See ibid pp 35-36 for the characterisation of the transition from traditional to bureaucratic.

112 Wilson Dockers esp pp 56-58.

113 Hill registers this specificity in Dockers, for example on p 53 and p 201.

114 Ibid p 123.

115 Ibid pp 122-3 for the first statement and pp 125-6 for the second.

116 Ibid p 22, and pp 72-3 for the rotation of workers and work-sharing.

117 Ibid pp 124-5, and see also p 33.

118 Ibid p 123 and see also p 147, though Hill also enters a note of qualification there in saying that "although decasualisation split people into different companies, which may in the long run weaken occupational solidarity, one short-term consequence of Phase 1 was to mix people more thoroughly than before".

119 Ibid, chapter 4 for the detailed data on these topics.

120 Ibid esp. p 60 and p 53. (Note also the comment on the managerial assumptions embodied in the design of equipment, on p 43, footnote 11).

121 Ibid esp. discussions on pp 73-80 and 198-199.

122 Ibid p 199; and for a brief sketch of the conflict in the docks in the early 1970's, which involved a direct confrontation with the trade union legislation of the Heath government, see Brian Weekes et al Industrial Relations and the Limits of Law Oxford 1973 appendix VII 'Chronology of Docks Dispute'.

123 I will refer to the articles by Chamberlain and Moorhouse listed in footnote 89, and to Davis Beyond Class Images. Davis directly criticises Moorhouse (and Chamberlain) in his final chapter and I will consider their disagreements following my commentary on the articles. The study by Chamberlain and Moorhouse was conducted in December 1972 and January 1973, in a period of wide-spread but patchy resort to 'rent strikes' in protest at the implementation of the Conservative Government's 'Fair Rent Act' (see Moorhouse and Chamberlain "Attitudes to Property" p 403, note 33). It was also a period of substantial and innovative industrial conflict, involving 'work-ins' and 'flying pickets' for example.

124 Moorhouse "Attitudes to Class" pp 479-483.

125 Ibid p 483. The evidence for disapproval is drawn from the second wave interviews, and is reported on p 489.

126 Ibid p 488, and documentation on pp 484-487.

127 Ibid pp 489-493.

128 Chamberlain and Moorhouse "Attitudes towards Political System" pp 508-513, quotation from p 513.

129 Ibid pp 508 and 516-8 and, for the percentage thinking the Conservatives

could be relied on, data in footnote 47 p 525.

130 Ibid p 518. Even 'hardcore' Labour voters split only 52% against 45% in favour of the view that a Labour Government made a difference!

131 Moorhouse and Chamberlain "Attitudes to Property" pp 393-397.

132 Chamberlain and Moorhouse "Attitudes towards Political System" p 514. 49% of withholders held this view.

133 Moorhouse and Chamberlain "Attitudes to Property" esp. p 398.

134 Data derived from each of the papers by Moorhouse and Chamberlain cited in footnote 89.

135 Moorhouse and Chamberlain "Attitudes to Property" pp 398-9.

136 Ibid pp 399-400.

137 Westergaard and Resler Class p 403, and the citation of the Barking study in the following pages.

138 Ralph Miliband Parliamentary Socialism London 1973, and the discussion in Chamberlain and Moorhouse "Attitudes towards Political System" pp 515-521.

139 Chamberlain and Moorhouse "Attitudes towards Political System" pp 519-521 and Moorhouse and Chamberlain "Attitudes to Property" pp 399-401.

140 See the discussion in the conclusions of all three articles cited in footnote 89, esp. Chamberlain and Moorhouse "Attitudes towards Political System" p 519 and the comments on Reich in Moorhouse "Attitudes to Class" p 492. For Lenin on class and party see Neil Harding Lenin's Political Thought 1977.

141 Moorhouse and Chamberlain "Attitudes to Property" p 398 and also repeated in Moorhouse "Attitudes to Class" p 492.

142 Moorhouse and Chamberlain "Attitudes to Property" p 400.

143 see the discussion of 'Manifesto marxism' above, pp

144 Chamberlain and Moorhouse "Attitudes towards Political System" p 519 and p 520.

145 Moorhouse "Attitudes to Class" pp 492-493.

146 Moorhouse and Chamberlain "Attitudes to Property" p 399, remark that "only two people in our entire sample had voted for the Communist Party in the last election and there was little sign of proselytizing groups around the estates where our interviewing took place".

147 Ibid p 391.

148 Chamberlain and Moorhouse "Attitudes towards Political System" p 519-520 and footnote 41 p 524; and see the evidence of Ivor Crewe et al "Partisan De-alignment in Britain, 1964-74" British Journal of Political Science vol. 7 1977, pp 129-190.

149 Moorhouse "Attitudes to Class" pp 478-9.

150 Davis Beyond Class Images pp 192-6.

151 Ibid p 196.

152 Ivor Crewe et al "The Why and How of Voting in February 1974" in Richard Rose (ed) Studies in British Politics (third edition) London 1976, p 246.

153 By the time he wrote up his own material Davis was involved in the detailed research on media presentations which was published in the several volumes by the Glasgow University Media Group, such as Bad News London 1976, but this focusses very much on presentation rather than the reception and interpretation of media messages.

154 Moorhouse "Attitudes to Class" p 495, footnote 35.

155 See above pp 232-238.

156 Davis Beyond Class Images chapters 1 and 2, and the presentation and critique of Touraine's approach in Alain Touraine "Towards a Sociology of Action" and Jean-Daniel Reynaud and Pierre Bourdieu "Is a Sociology of Action Possible?" in Anthony Giddens (ed) Positivism and Sociology London 1974.

157 Davis Beyond Class Images pp 29 and 38.

158 Ibid pp 75-79, chapter 6, and pp 183-4.

159 Ibid pp 83-89, chapter 7, and pp 185-6.

160 Ibid pp 60-74, chapter 5, and pp 178-181.

161 Ibid p 99.

162 Ibid pp 107-8.

163 Ibid p 114.

164 Ibid, especially the discussion on pp 106-111.

165 Ibid p 43 notes the ambiguity of Touraine's programme, while the discussion of careers in chapter 4 is explicitly indepted to Goffman.

166 Ibid pp 174-177 and 193-197.

167 Ibid pp 174-176.

168 Ibid p 50 and p 177 for explicit recognition of this feature of the study.

169 Ibid p 196.

170 See discussion on pp 245-251.

171 For a further discussion of the character and circumstances of bargained seniority provisions in steel in the post-war period see Richard Hyman and Tony Elger "Job Controls, the Employers' Offensive and Alternative Strategies" Capital and Class 15, 1981, pp 128-132.

172 Davis Beyond Class Images p 183.

173 Ibid p 102 for a comment on the harmonistic perspectives of the maintenance fitters who were nearing retirement.

174 Ibid p 97 for discussion of grading, p 94 for mention of contractors, and p 119 footnote 23 for mention of the 'closed shop strike'.

175 P.K. Edwards and Hugh Scullion The Social Organisation of Industrial Conflict Oxford 1982, pp 112-3, which comments on the material in Davis Beyond Class Images chapter 5, the most extensive of the occupational studies.(the mention of the exclusion of the union official is on p 105).

176 Davis Beyond Class Images, compare the comments on p 106 and p 111.

177 The studies which I have included under this heading are Beynon Ford (second edition 1984); Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided; Nichols and Beynon Capitalism; Theo Nichols "Labourism and Class Consciousness: the 'Class Ideology' of Some Northern Foremen" Sociological Review 22 1974, pp 483-502; and Theo Nichols "The 'Socialism' of Management: Some Comments on the New 'Human Relations'" Sociological Review 23 1975 pp 245-265.

178 The data on wages is contained in John Mathews Ford Strike London 1972, p 177 table 2; while the quote about chemical workers is from Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 170.

179 Examples of studies arising out of work with stewards include Huw Beynon and Hilary Wainwright The Workers' Report on Vickers London 1979; Hilary Wainwright and Dave Elliott The Lucas Plan: a New Trade Unionism in the Making? London 1982; and Paul Thompson and Eddie Bannon Working The System: the Shop Floor and New Technology London 1985. Examples of feminist ethnographies include Anna Pollert Girls, Wives, Factory Lives London 1981; Ruth Cavendish Women on the Line London 1982; and Sallie Westwood All Day, Every Day London 1984.

180 Huw Beynon and Theo Nichols "Modern British Sociology and the Affluent Worker" unpublished paper 1972, and the discussion of their argument in earlier chapters.

181 See particularly Beynon Ford (second ed) pp 13-18, and contrast this with the esoteric arguments of Althuserianism and post-Althuserians in particular.

182 Beynon himself summarises and responds to some of the more intemperate criticisms, in Ford (second ed) preface to second edition. The charge of sociological amnesia is to be found in Isabel Emmett and David Morgan "Max Gluckman and the Manchester Shop-floor Ethnographies" in Ronald Frankenberg (ed) Custom and Conflict in British Society Manchester 1982, though it should be noted that the arguments which Beynon, Nichols and Armstrong develop are more distinctive than Emmett and Morgan allow, especially in relating informal workplace interaction to the broader strategies of capital and the strategic dilemmas of the organised labour movement. Furthermore the published Manchester ethnographies are not entirely ignored, for Nichols and Armstrong cite Tom Lupton's On the Shop Floor (London 1963) as "at least indicating the numerous ways in which work behaviour is structured" Workers Divided p 217.

183 This is true, for example, of the discussion of the discussion of different management strategies in John Purcell and Keith Sisson "Strategies and Practice in the Management of Industrial Relations" (p 115) and the analysis of different patterns of steward organisation in Michael Terry "Shop Steward Development and Managerial Strategies", both in George Bain (ed) Industrial Relations in Britain Oxford 1983.

184 See in particular Beynon Ford (first ed) p 14 and (second ed) p 21, where he indicates the inspiration of E.P. Thompson's The Making of the English Class Harmondsworth 1968.

185 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 68 and Beynon Ford (first ed) p 14.

186 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism pp 117-8 and also Beynon Ford (second ed) p 16.

187 Beynon Ford (first ed) p 9.

188 See in particular the comments of Blackburn and Mann quoted on p 238 above, and for the issue of the relationship to earlier ethnographies see footnote 182 above.

189 The quotation is from Nichols "Northern Foremen" p 500, and see also the comments in Beynon Ford preface to the second edition, and the reference to how they "talked and argued with informants" in Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 191.

190 See Beynon Ford (second ed) p 14.

191 Ibid p 21.

192 Ibid for quotes on p 225 and p 123, and Nichols and Beynon Capitalism chapter 2 for the discussion of management thinking.

193 Beynon Ford (second ed) pp 242-5 for Les and Eddie, and Beynon and Nichols Capitalism pp 89-94 for Billy King.

194 For a balanced discussion of this issue see Simon Clarke "Socialist Humanism and the Critique of Economism" History Workshop 8 1979 pp 138-156. Beynon himself mentions the "attractive looseness" of Thompson's position, which might now need to be "tightened up", but he does not say in what respects this is the case, in Ford (second ed) p 21.

195 Beynon Ford (second ed) pp 192-8 and 240-5; Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided pp 130-147; and Nichols "Northern Foremen".

196 See Clarke "Socialist Humanism"; and for a more general discussion and

assessment of the different marxian approaches to ideology and consciousness see Jorge Larrain Marxism and Ideology London 1983.

197 See Larrain Ideology; and for an illuminating ethnographic study which develops the notions of limitation and penetration see Paul Willis Learning to Labour Farnborough 1977 (though it should be noted that Willis does not fully explore the sources of limiting features of consciousness, nor does he really consider the ways in which relative advantages in the labour market might structure a different consciousness of wage labour to that developed by the 'lads'.

198 On the issue of generalisation from case studies compare Beynon's comments in Ford, preface to second edition, with Nichols and Armstrong in Workers Divided p 17 where they remark "of course the situation of ChemCo workers is a particular one, inescapably so. It is not typical of the whole economy any more than that of any other workplace could be".

199 Beynon Ford (second ed) pp 103 and 129.

200 Ibid chapters 1-3 on Ford management's strategy.

201 Ibid p 292. This is the theme explored most fully in the chapter on 'Ford's Global Strategy' (chapter 12) in the second edition.

202 Ibid p 75.

203 Ibid pp 101-2.

204 Ibid p 92.

205 Ibid p 311.

206 Ibid p 153.

207 Ibid p 159, and p 149 for the report that "management conceded to the stewards the right to hold the key that locked the assembly line", though p 152 notes the limits of that form of control.

208 Ibid p 141.

209 Ibid p 137.

210 Ibid.

211 Ibid p 143.

212 Beynon Ford (first ed) p 315. The phrase is included in the statement by Ronnie Walsh.

213 Beynon Ford (second ed) p 161.

214 Ibid p 47.

215 Ibid p 77

216 Ibid p 106, and at several other points such as the quotation at the bottom of p 92.

217 Ibid p 344.

218 Ibid p 160.

219 Ibid pp 345-9.

220 Ibid pp 88-90 for discussion of the experience of Johnny Jones.

221 Ibid p 227.

222 Ibid p 168.

223 Ibid pp 168-9.

224 Ibid p 226, and see p 219 for the 'armchair generals'.

225 Ibid p 177.

226 Ibid p 85 and see pp 104 and 192-197 among others.

227 Ibid p 232.

228 Ibid p 136.

229 Ibid p 104.

230 Ibid p 81 uses the phrase quoted.

231 In this respect Beynon's analysis has quite strong parallels with the later case study of the role of senior stewards provided by Eric Batstone et al Shop Stewards in Action Oxford 1979, and a more detailed comparison of these two studies, both in terms of different analytical approaches and in terms of the distinctive patterns of management-worker relations in these two well-organised factories would be very valuable. All I can signal here is that Beynon explores rather more fully than does Batstone the specific and contested character of the 'union principles' articulated and mobilised by the stewards, and that the Ford example underlines more strongly the struggle and vulnerability surrounding shop-floor counter-controls, while Massey-Ferguson appears to be characterised by a somewhat less militant management and more settled relationships with an entrenched workplace trade unionism.

232 Beynon Ford (second ed) pp 192, 196, 244 and elsewhere.

233 Ibid p 109.

234 Beynon Ford (first ed) p 93.

235 Beynon Ford (second ed) pp 243-4.

236 Ibid p 209.

237 Ibid p 190.

238 See ibid p 141 footnote, for the specific comment on sectionalism.

239 Ibid pp 19-20, and see also p 104.

240 The introduction to the first edition of Beynon Ford cites Tony Cliff and Colin Barker Incomes Policy, Legislation and Shop Stewards London 1966, and Tony Topham "Shop Stewards and Workers' Control" New Left Review 25 1964, as important analyses of the developing shop-floor politics of shop-stewards organisation; while the work of H.A. Turner et al Labour Relations in the Motor Industry London 1967, is cited as the "one good account of industrial relations in the car plants" (p 12 footnote).

241 Beynon Ford (second ed) p 223.

242 Thus, despite his celebration of the achievements of workplace unionism, Beynon clearly endorses Marx's diagnosis of the limitations of trade unionism, as outlined in Wages, Prices and Profit. See Beynon Ford (first edition) p 317 and (second edition) p 369. I will return to this theme in the conclusion to this chapter.

243 See especially Beynon Ford (second ed) pp 298-302 and also (first ed) p 299.

244 Beynon Ford (second ed) quotations from pp 98, 234 and 98; and see the discussion on pp 228-235 especially.

245 Ibid p 109.

246 Ibid p 389.

247 See ibid p 150. It should be noted that this subtle discussion of rank and file refusals, including sabotage, is misrepresented in the criticism by Colin Crouch Trade Unions: the Logic of Collective Action Glasgow 1982 p 33, where he seeks to draw a sharp distinction between the celebration of such action in Working For Ford and the critical stance in Workers Divided.

248 Beynon Ford (second ed) p 151. He then adds "but although individual acts of sabotage can be antipathetic to unionism, not all sabotage need be", an important qualification, but not one which could justify Crouch's comments mentioned in the previous footnote.

249 Ibid pp 150-1.

250 Ibid.

251 Beynon Ford (first ed) p 300.

252 These are the characterisations developed within the Leninist tradition; by Goldthorpe et al in the Affluent Worker; and by Michael Mann in Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class London 1973.

253 See the discussion of the arguments of Westergaard and of Moorhouse earlier in this chapter, and the comments on Robin Blackburn's analysis of escalating consciousness (somewhat more modest than is imputed to him by, for example, Mann) in chapter 3.

254 Beynon Ford (second ed) p 390.

255 Ibid p 389.

256 Ibid pp 19-20 for Beynon's comments on the strengths and weaknesses of such focussing.

257 Ibid p 225.

258 Ibid pp 141, 176, 235 and 258 on sectionalism and unity, and pp 157, 167 and 259 on favouritism and the 'blue eye' system.

259 Ibid p 200 for remarks about the impact of the 'dominant culture' which have this clear implication.

260 Ibid pp 189-190.

261 Beynon's conceptions of "refusal" and "the mass worker" both owe something to the analyses developed by the theorists of Autonomia, who were, of course particularly concerned to analyse the character of Fordism. For examples of their analyses see G. Baldi "Theses on the Mass Worker and Social Capital" Radical America 6 1972 pp 3-21, and Red Notes (ed) Working Class Autonomy and the Crisis: Italian Marxist Texts of the Theory and Practice of a Class Movement, 1964-79 London 1979, especially the essays by Tronti and Bologna. For some critical discussion of these analyses see Bob Lumley's review of the Red Notes collection in "Working Class Autonomy and the Crisis" Capital and Class 12 1980 pp 123-135; and also Tony Elger "Theories of the Labour Process, Class Composition and Workers' Struggles" (section on 'the mass worker and struggle as refusal; critical comments on theorists of autonomia') Glasgow Sociology Seminar Paper 1980.

262 Davis Beyond Class Images, discussed above; and see also Richard Hyman and Tony Elger "Job Controls, the Emplyers' Offensive and Alternative Strategies" Capital and Class 15 1981, esp. pp 128-132.

263 Beynon Ford (second ed) pp 222-3.

264 Ibid p 57. Of course this is the key focus of Turner et al Labour Relations in the Motor Industry, but as I have suggested in chapter 3 their analysis, though rightly praised by Beynon, overstates the specificity of class relations in the different plants at the level of bargaining institutions.

265 Beynon Ford (second ed) pp 184-5.

266 This is a theme which I have sought to pursue at several points in this thesis. I have touched on it particularly in my discussion of internal variations of experience among the Luton workers in chapter 2, and in this chapter in relation to sectoral variations; and I will return to it

in the course of my discussion of my own case studies, especially in chapter 8. Among marxian analyses which have addressed this question in an interesting way in recent years the following contributions are particularly useful: Doreen Massey and Richard Meegan The Anatomy of Job Loss London 1982; William Lazonick "Industrial Relations and Technical Change" Cambridge Journal of Economics 3 1979 pp 231-262; and Paul Thompson and Eddie Bannon Working the System London 1985. They consider sectoral, enterprise and workplace/departmental variations respectively.

267 See in particular the consultant's report quoted in Beynon Ford (second ed) p 339 and the more general discussion of the establishment of the Bridgend plant in chapter 12.

268 Ibid: the first quote is from p 344, the second from p 348; and also note the comment about management having become "a hell of a lot more sophisticated" on p 343.

269 Ibid p 350.

270 Ibid: first quote from pp 350-1, the second from p 349.

271 Ibid p 372.

272 Ibid p 374.

273 Such an analysis in terms of the bureaucratisation of the rank and file was summarised in Richard Hyman "The Politics of Workplace Trade Unionism" Capital and Class 8 1979 pp 54-67, though here too the organisational dynamics of workplace trade unionism may be over-emphasised in relation to the shifting terrain on which organisation has to operate, the impact of this on the political inflection given to steward leadership, and the political horizons within which they have long operated. For Beynon's stress on the longevity of service among the stewards see esp. Ford (second ed) p 350.

274 See in particular the characterisation of Bill McGuire as "a moderate. He believed in reason and discussions", in Beynon Ford (first ed) p 116.

275 See the discussion in Clarke "Socialist Humanism" esp pp

276 Mann Consciousness and Action.

277 See also Thompson and Bannon Working the System pp 104-6.

278 Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided p 15, and the discussion of Westergaard's argument about potential radicalisation on p 202.

279 The classic statements of an optimistic diagnosis concerning progressive management in chemicals are provided by Blauner Alienation and Freedom and Woodward Management and Technology in different variants of the 'technical implications' approach; but the sector has also been the focus of a variety of major personnel innovations and panaceas. The reference to explosions of consciousness concerns the Blackburn/Mann debate, : discussed in chapter three. At this point it should be noted that the specific objectives of the two main monographs arising from the ChemCo research were slightly different though complementary, with Nichols and Beynon Capitalism offering a general overview of class relations on the site, including particular attention to the experience and outlooks of management as well as workers, while Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided takes up several specific themes in more detail, particularly the dynamics of consciousness and the limits of parochial job control. Nevertheless I will treat them together as a report on the ChemCo research.

280 See Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 12. The targets of criticism here are not only Blauner et al, but also the Mallet/Gorz view of the 'new working class', though Nichols and Beynon are somewhat mischievous in attributing such a 'post-industrialism' view to Goldthorpe et al in Capitalism p xiii.

281 Ibid p 108.

282 Ibid p 21, and also the comparison on p 15.

283 Ibid p 23. (This passage was slightly misquoted in Tony Elger "Braverman, Capital Accumulation and Deskilling" in Stephen Wood (ed) The Degradation of Work p 48).

284 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 176, and also p 13.

285 Ibid p 16.

286 Nichols "'Socialism' of Management" p 249.

287 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 6 and Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided p 23.

288 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 27.

289 Ibid p 109.

290 Ibid p 27.

291 Ibid p 28.

292 Ibid p 108.

293 Ibid p 33, and see also the discussion on p 110 and in Nichols "'Socialism' of Management".

294 Ibid pp 108-9.

295 Ibid p 111.

296 Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided p 28.

297 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 114, and also the discussion on p 92.

298 Ibid p 113 for the phrase 'administrative adjunct'.

299 Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided p 112.

300 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 16.

301 See especially the discussion in Nichols "'Socialism' of Management".

302 For an example of relatively successful pressure by workers see Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided p 43.

303 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism pp 129-130.

304 See especially the discussion in Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided.

305 See the case study in ibid pp 98-110.

306 Nichols "'Socialism' of Management" p 262.

307 Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided p 82.

308 Ibid, esp. pp 60-63.

309 So the minority of workers who disagreed with more distant supervision, for example, did so partly because they felt they would finish up doing more of the work than their mates.

310 Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided p 66 and Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 141.

311 Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided pp 69-70.

312 See especially the more detailed discussion of these features in Theo Nichols and Peter Armstrong Safety or Profit? Industrial Accidents and the Conventional Wisdom Bristol 1973.

313 Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided p 16.

314 Ibid p 68.

315 Ibid.

316 Ibid.

317 This was the really crucial difference between the Ford and ChemCo plants in regard to the issue of sabotage and its relationship to effective collective action, rather than the spurious contrast drawn by Crouch and noted in footnote 247 above.

318 See pp 300-301 above.

319 See pp 245-247 above.

320 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 180.

321 Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided p 58.

322 Ibid esp. pp 148-210.

323 Ibid p 37 and Nichols "'Socialism' of Management" p 263.

324 Nichols et al do not explicitly analyse these features in terms of the conception of 'radical needs', but it is entirely consistent with their approach. I believe that this conception, which I mentioned briefly in my introduction, provides a more adequate basis for the theorising of these features than does the philosophical anthropology of identity and identity crisis outlined by David Knights and Hugh Willmott in their commentary on Living With Capitalism in "Power and Identity in Theory and Practice" Sociological Review 33 1985 pp 22-46.

325 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism chapter 13.

326 Nichols "Northern Foremen", and similar material in Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided pp 128-147.

327 Nichols "Northern Foremen" p 493.

328 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 66.

329 Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided p 145 for the quote; and Nichols and Beynon Capitalism pp 151-154 and pp 86-7 for Alfie.

330 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 154.

331 These are the one-sided interpretations which can be seen in, respectively, Knights and Willmott "Power and Identity"; Crouch Trade Unions; and at some points Nichols and Armstrong themselves in Workers Divided.

332 Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided p 37.

333 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 129.

334 Ibid p 107, and see also p 46.

335 Duncan Gallie In Search of the New Working Class Cambridge 1978.

336 Ibid. See also the brief comments on his discussion of tightening productivity pressures in Tony Elger "Braverman, capital accumulation and deskilling" pp 49-50.

337 There are hints in the case study that these other groups of workers were the primary targets of management strategy, as in Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided p 38.

338 See, for example, Nichols and Beynon Capitalism pp 66-7, footnote 3, on the mobile operator. This is the appropriate point to register one further query about the analysis of heterogeneity and divisions within the workforce, though one which falls on the margins of the discussion in this thesis, and this concerns their analysis of the class location of the varied levels of management and supervision. As is evident from my discussion, Nichols et al both underline the centrality of the exercise of management power and explore some of sophisticated forms this takes. Beyond this they discuss in a particularly interesting way both the ideology and consciousness of management, and the way in which corporate

reorganisation has modified this. For most managers it meant a closer alignment of career ambitions and the requirements of capital, a more incisive subordination of merely social or technical coordination to accounting criteria, which was usually smoothed by commitment to the rhetoric of 'systems thinking'; while for the older foremen, less facile in the newer ways of doing things and threatened with displacement, it meant the dismantling of their established role, and they responded with a puzzled and defensive collectivism. In their analysis of such developments they offer well-made criticisms of those theorists who would simply assimilate management into the working class, but in turn they appear to underwrite a unitary view of management as agents of capital without any real consideration of such analyses as that of Wright in Class, Crisis and the State London 1978 (first published in New Left Review 1976). Nichols defends his neo-Poulantzian position against an approach which focusses on 'contradictory class locations' in "Management and its Relation to Capital and Labour" in Theo Nichols (ed) Capital and Labour London 1980 esp. pp 214-5; but his comments do not really come to grips with the internal differentiation of management which was one of the issues raised by their own ethnography and was a focus of Wright's analysis.

339 Sheila Cunnison "The Manchester Factory Studies ..." in Ronald Frankenberg (ed) Custom and Conflict in British Society Manchester 1982 p 133. Armstrong's discussion is in Nichols and Armstrong Workers Divided pp 85-97.

340 Nichols and Beynon Capitalism p 130 footnote 3.

341 Here it is important to note that since this part of my thesis was drafted Jennifer Platt has published an overview of the reception of the Affluent Worker studies during the last fifteen years: "The 'Affluent Worker' Re-visited" in Colin Bell and Helen Roberts (eds) Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Practice London 1984. Her discussion takes a broader view of the range of criticisms and casual citations which have characterised this reception, and in the course of this she not only draws attention to the variety of interpretations and misinterpretations which have occurred (including, for example, the comments by Gorz which I mention in chapter 3) but also has interesting observations on the way in which the expansion of professional sociology meant that a key cohort of sociologists were being trained at the time of publication of the studies. Nevertheless her comments have not led me to modify the substance of my critical appraisal.

342 Mann Consciousness and Action esp. p 21.

343 Ibid pp 22 and 41-2.

344 Ibid pp 36-7, and for his own characterisation of his position in terms of a modified 'end of ideology' thesis see p 39.

345 In this regard it is also worth noting that, alongside questions which may be raised concerning the aberrant character of hard-line management in the US and UK, Gallie has suggested that the French radicalism which was the main focus of this part of Mann's discussion cannot be analysed simply as a survival from pre-capitalist social relations, but must be related to specific state and corporate strategies during the more recent transformation of French capitalism. See Duncan Gallie Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain Cambridge 1983, part three.

346 For a more general discussion which moves in a similar direction see Richard Hyman Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism London 1971, especially the conclusion.

347 Mann introduces brief consideration of heterogeneity and divisions at two points in Consciousness and Action; firstly as an extra-economic basis for the more intractable conservatism of sections of the US working class, and secondly as a feature which would undermine any incipient unity should capitalism falter in its capacity to fund economistic bargaining and concessions. However neither of these points is integral to his argument, and neither is expanded upon, while the discussion of sectionalism in Blackburn and Mann The Working Class in the Labour Market moves in different directions again.

348 Hill Competition and Control at Work pp 217-228, and also the comments on pp 170-171.

349 Richard Edwards Contested Terrain London 1979, and Andrew L. Friedman Industry and Labour London 1977. My discussion of these studies has been particularly influenced by the critical appraisals provided by Jill Rubery "Structured Labour Markets, Worker Organisation and Low Pay" Cambridge Journal of Economics 2 1978 pp 17-36, and by Paul Thompson The Nature of Work London 1985 chapter 5.

350 See also Theo Nichols "Review of Richard Edwards 'Contested Terrain'." Capital and Class 14 1981 pp 151-155.

351 Edwards Contested Terrain p 132.

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